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THE WORKS OF  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
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# THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME TWO

EDITED BY  
SIR SIDNEY COLVIN



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## NOTE

LETTERS marked with an asterisk in the Table of Contents appear for the first time in an edition designed for the general reader. Some of them have not been available before in book form.

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IV

ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR

EDINBURGH—PARIS—FONTAINEBLEAU

JULY, 1875—JULY, 1879



# THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## IV

### ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR

HAVING on the 14th of July, 1875, passed with credit his examination for the Bar at Edinburgh, Stevenson thenceforth enjoyed whatever status and consideration attaches to the title of Advocate. But he made no serious attempt to practise, and by the 25th of the same month had started with Sir Walter Simpson for France. Here he lived and tramped for several weeks among the artist haunts of Fontainebleau and the neighbourhood, occupying himself chiefly with studies of the French poets and poetry of the fifteenth century, which afterwards bore fruit in his papers on Charles of Orleans and François Villon. Thence he travelled to join his parents at Wiesbaden and Homburg. Returning in the autumn to Scotland, he made, to please them, an effort to live the ordinary life of an Edinburgh advocate—attending trials and spending his mornings in wig and gown at the Parliament House. But this attempt was before long abandoned as tending to waste of time and being incompatible with his real occupation of literature. Through the next winter and spring he remained in Edinburgh, except for a short winter walking tour in Ayrshire and Galloway, and a month spent among his friends in London. In the late summer of 1876, after a visit to the West Highlands, he made the canoe trip with Sir Walter Simpson which furnished the subject of the *Inland Voyage*. This was followed by a prolonged autumn stay at Grez and



Barbizon. The life, atmosphere, and scenery of these forest haunts had charmed and soothed him, as we have seen, since he was first introduced to them by his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, in the spring of 1875. An unfettered, unconventional, open-air existence, passed face to face with nature and in the company of congenial people engaged, like himself, in grappling with the problems and difficulties of an art, had been what he had longed for most consistently through all the agitations of his youth. And now he had found just such an existence, and with it, as he thought, peace of mind, health, and the spirit of unimpeded work.

But peace of mind was not to be his for long. What indeed awaited him in the forest was something different and more momentous : it was his fate : the romance which decided his life, and the companion whom he resolved to make his own at all hazards. But of this hereafter. To continue briefly the annals of the time : the year 1877 was again spent between Edinburgh, London, the Fontainebleau region, and several different temporary abodes in the artists' and other quarters of Paris ; with an excursion in the company of his parents to the Land's End in August. In 1878 a similar general mode of life was varied ; first by a visit with his parents in March to Burford Bridge, where he made warm friends with a senior to whom he had long looked up from a distance, Mr. George Meredith ; next by a spell of secretarial work under Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who was serving as a juror on the Paris Exhibition ; and lastly by the autumn tramp through the Cévennes, afterwards recounted with so much charm in *Travels with a Donkey*. The first half of 1879 was again spent between London, Scotland, and France.

During these four years, it should be added, Stevenson's health was passable enough. It often, indeed, threatened to give way after any prolonged residence in Edinburgh, but was generally soon restored by open-air excursions (during which he was capable of fairly vigorous and sustained dai'y exercise), or by a spell of life among the woods of Fontainebleau. They were also the years in which he

settled for good into his chosen profession of letters. He worked rather desultorily for the first twelve months after his call to the Bar, but afterwards with ever-growing industry and success, winning from the critical a full measure of recognition, though relatively little, so far, from the general public. In 1875 and 1876 he contributed as a journalist, though not frequently, to the *Academy* and *Vanity Fair*, and in 1877 more abundantly to *London*, a weekly review founded by Mr. Glasgow Brown, an acquaintance of Edinburgh Speculative days, and carried on, after the failure of that gentleman's health, by Mr. Henley. But he had no great gift or liking for journalism, or for any work not calling for the best literary form and finish he could give. Where he found special scope for such work was in the *Cornhill Magazine* under the editorship of Mr. Leslie Stephen. Here he continued his critical papers on men and books, already started in 1874 with *Victor Hugo*, and began in 1876 the series of papers afterwards collected in *Virginibus Puerisque*. They were continued in 1877, and in greater number throughout 1878. His first published stories appeared as follows:—*A Lodging for the Night*, *Temple Bar*, October, 1877; *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*, *Temple Bar*, January, 1878; and *Will o' the Mill*, *Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1878. In May, 1878, followed his first travel book, *An Inland Voyage*, containing the account of his canoe trip from Antwerp to Grez. This was to Stevenson a year of great and various productiveness. Besides six or eight characteristic essays of the *Virginibus Puerisque* series, there appeared in *London* the set of fantastic modern tales called *Latter-day Arabian Nights*,\* conceived and written in an entirely different key from any of his previous work, as well as the kindly, sentimental comedy of French artist life, *Providence and the Guitar*; and in the *Portfolio* the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, republished at the end of the year in book form. During the autumn and winter of this year he wrote *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, and was much and eagerly engaged in the planning of plays in collaboration with Mr. Henley;

\* Reprinted four years later under the title, *New Arabian Nights*.



of which one, *Deacon Brodie*, was finished in the spring of 1879. In the same spring he drafted in Edinburgh, but afterwards laid by, four chapters on ethics, a study of which he once spoke as being always his " veiled mistress," under the name of *Lay Morals*.

But abounding in good work as this period was, and momentous as it was in regard to Stevenson's future life, it is a period which figures but meagrely in his correspondence. Without the least breach of friendship, or even of intimate confidence on occasion, Stevenson had begun, as was natural and necessary, to wean himself from his entire dependence on his friend and counsellor of the last two years ; to take his life more into his own hands ; and to intermit the regularity of his correspondence with her. A few new correspondents appear, but to none of us in these days did he write more than scantily. Partly his growing absorption by the complications of his life and the interests of his work left him little time or inclination for letter-writing ; partly his greater freedom of movement made it unnecessary. On his way backwards and forwards between Scotland and France, his friends in London had the chance of seeing him much more frequently than of yore. He avoided formal and dress-coated society ; but in the company of congenial friends, whether men or women, and in places like the Savile Club (his favourite haunt), he was as brilliant and stimulating as ever, and however acute his inward preoccupations, his visits were always a delight.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I have no recollection of the Italian story here condemned ; but Stevenson's judgments on his own works were at all times apt to depend less on its merits than on his mood and spirits of the moment.

[Edinburgh, end of July, 1875]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Herewith you receive the rest of Henley's hospital work. He was much pleased by what you said of him, and asked me to forward these to you for your opinion. One poem, the *Spring Sorrow*, seems to me the most beautiful. I thank God for this *petit bout de consolation*, that by Henley's own account, this one more lovely thing in the world is not altogether without some trace of my influence : let me say that I have been something sympathetic which the mother found and contemplated while she yet carried it in her womb. This, in my profound discouragement, is a great thing for me ; if I cannot do good with myself, at least, it seems, I can help others better inspired ; I am at least a skilful accoucheur. My discouragement is from many causes : among others the re-reading of my Italian story. Forgive me, Colvin, but I cannot agree with you ; it seems green fruit to me, if not really unwholesome ; it is profoundly feeble, damn its weakness ! Moreover I stick over my *Fontainebleau*, it presents difficulties to me that I surmount slowly.

I am very busy with *Béranger* for the *Britannica*. Shall be up in town on Friday or Saturday.—Ever yours,

R. L. S., *Advocate*.

## TO MRS. SITWELL

The following letter must date from a second visit paid by Stevenson to Barbizon in the summer of 1875. " Nous n'irons plus aux bois " is the beginning of a poem by Théodore de Banville, which he had set himself in these days very successfully to translate, or rather paraphrase. *Béranger* means an



article on that poet which Stevenson had been commissioned to write for a new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

[*Chez Siron, Barbizon, Summer, 1875*]

Nous n'irons plus aux bois, les lauriers sont coupés ; that thing has rung in my ears ever since I saw you, Madonna. I could not write for a thousand reasons ; and even now, write only in the teeth of a positive reluctance, lest you should think I had forgotten you ; which is not so.

I have had one of my curious inertias and desires to sleep these last days ; yesterday I slept almost the whole day ; but I am alright again now. I should like to sleep a great deal ; I do not like being awake and averse from work ; which is a virtuous feeling. *Béranger* still trails on, I cannot get my back into anything.

Birds chirp, cocks crow, asses bray, a little wind goes about among the trees, some women splash wet clothes outside my window.

Good-bye, think of me a little if you can. Love to all.

Ever your faithful,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Chez Siron, Barbizon  
Seine et Marne [August, 1875]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have been three days at a place called Grez, a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain. A low bridge of many arches choked with sedge ; great fields of white and yellow water-lilies ; poplars and willows innumerable ; and about it all such an atmosphere of sadness and slackness, one could do nothing but get into the boat and out of it again, and yawn for bedtime.

Yesterday Bob and I walked home ; it came on a very creditable thunderstorm ; we were soon wet through ; sometimes the rain was so heavy that one could only see by holding the hand over the eyes ; and to crown all, we lost our way and wandered all over the place, and into the artillery range, among broken trees, with big shot lying about

among the rocks. It was near dinner-time when we got to Barbizon ; and it is supposed that we walked from twenty-three to twenty-five miles, which is not bad for the Advocate, who is not tired this morning. I was very glad to be back again in this dear place, and smell the wet forest in the morning.

Simpson and the rest drove back in a carriage, and got about as wet as we did.

Why don't you write ? I have no more to say.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

At this time Stevenson was much occupied, as were several young writers his contemporaries, with imitating the artificial forms of early French verse. Only one of his attempts, I believe, has been preserved, besides the two contained in this letter. The second is a variation on a theme of Banville's.

*Château Renard, Loiret, August, 1875*

I HAVE been walking these last days from place to place ; and it does make it hot for walking with a sack in this weather. I am burned in horrid patches of red ; my nose, I fear, is going to take the lead in colour ; Simpson is all flushed, as if he were seen by a sunset. I send you here two rondeaux ; I don't suppose they will amuse anybody but me ; but this measure, short and yet intricate, is just what I desire ; and I have had some good times walking along the glaring roads, or down the poplar alley of the great canal, pitting my own humour to this old verse.

Far have you come, my lady, from the town,  
And far from all your sorrows, if you please,  
To smell the good sea-winds and hear the seas,  
And in green meadows lay your body down.

To find your pale face grow from pale to brown,  
Your sad eyes growing brighter by degrees ;  
Far have you come, my lady, from the town,  
And far from all your sorrows, if you please.



Here in this seaboard land of old renown,  
 In meadow grass go wading to the knees ;  
 Bathe your whole soul a while in simple ease ;  
 There is no sorrow but the sea can drown ;  
 Far have you come, my lady, from the town.

*Nous n'irons plus au bois*  
 We'll walk the woods no more,  
 But stay beside the fire,  
 To weep for old desire  
 And things that are no more.  
 The woods are spoiled and hoar,  
 The ways are full of mire ;  
 We'll walk the woods no more,  
 But stay beside the fire.  
 We loved, in days of yore,  
 Love, laughter, and the lyre.  
 Ah God, but death is dire,  
 And death is at the door—  
 We'll walk the woods no more.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

The special mood or occasion of unaccustomed bitterness which prompted this rhapsody has passed from memory beyond recall. The date must be after his return from his second excursion to Fontainebleau.

[*Swanston, late Summer 1875*] Thursday

I HAVE been staying in town, and could not write a word. It is a fine strong night, full of wind ; the trees are all crying out in the darkness ; funny to think of the birds asleep outside, on the tossing branches, the little bright eyes closed, the brave wings folded, the little hearts that beat so hard and thick (so much harder and thicker than ever human heart) all stilled and quieted in deep slumber, in the midst of this noise and turmoil. Why, it will be as much as I can do to sleep in here in my walled room ; so loud and jolly the wind sounds through the open window. The unknown places of the night invite the travelling fancy ; I like to think of the sleeping towns and sleeping farm-houses and cottages, all the world over, here by the

white road poplar-lined, there by the clamorous surf. Isn't that a good dormitive?

*Saturday.*—I cannot tell how I feel, who can ever? I feel like a person in a novel of George Sand's; I feel I desire to go out of the house, and begin life anew in the cool blue night; never to come back here; never, never. Only to go out for ever by sunny day and grey day, by bright night and foul, by high-way and by-way, town and hamlet, until somewhere by a road-side or in some clean inn clean death opened his arms to me and took me to his quiet heart for ever. If soon, good; if late, well then, late—there would be many a long bright mile behind me, many a goodly, many a serious sight; I should die ripe and perfect, and take my garnered experience with me into the cool, sweet earth. For I have died already and survived a death; I have seen the grass grow rankly on my grave; I have heard the train of mourners come weeping and go laughing away again. And when I was alone there in the kirk-yard, and the birds began to grow familiar with the grave-stone, I have begun to laugh also, and laughed and laughed until night-flowers came out above me. I have survived myself, and somehow live on, a curious changeling, a merry ghost; and do not mind living on, finding it not unpleasant; only had rather, a thousandfold, died and been done with the whole damned show for ever. It is a strange feeling at first to survive yourself, but one gets used to that as to most things. *Et puis*, is it not one's own fault? Why did not one lie still in the grave? Why rise again among men's troubles and toils, where the wicked wag their shock beards and hound the weary out to labour? When I was safe in prison, and stone walls and iron bars were an hermitage about me, who told me to burst the mild constraint and go forth where the sun dazzles, and the wind pierces, and the loud world sounds and jangles all through the weary day? I mind an old print of a hermit coming out of a great wood towards evening and shading his bleared eyes to see all the kingdoms of the earth before his feet, where towered cities and castled hills, and stately rivers, and good corn lands made one great chorus of temptation



for his weak spirit, and I think I am the hermit, and would to God I had dwelt ever in the wood of penitence \*—  
R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The *Burns* herein mentioned is an article undertaken in the early summer of the same year for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In the end Stevenson's work was thought to convey a view of the poet too frankly critical, and too little in accordance with the accepted Scotch tradition; and the publishers, duly paying him for his labours, transferred the task to Professor Shairp. The volume here announced on the three Scottish eighteenth-century poets unfortunately never came into being. The *Charles of Orleans* essay appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* for December of the following year; that on Villon (with the story on the same theme, *A Lodging for the Night*) not until the autumn of 1877. The essay on Béranger referred to at the end of the letter was one commissioned and used by the editor of the *Encyclopædia*: *Spring* was a prose poem, of which the manuscript, sent to me at Cambridge, was unluckily lost in the confusion of a change of rooms.

Edinburgh, [Autumn, 1875]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thanks for your letter and news. No—my *Burns* is not done yet, it has led me so far afield that I cannot finish it; every time I think I see my way to an end, some new game (or perhaps wild goose) starts up, and away I go. And then, again, to be plain, I shirk the work of the critical part, shirk it as a man shirks a long jump. It is awful to have to express and differentiate *Burns* in a column or two. O golly, I say, you know, it *can't* be done at the money. All the more as I'm going to write a book about it. *Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns: an Essay* (or a critical essay? but then I'm going to give lives of the three gentlemen, only the gist of the book is the criticism) by Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate. How's that for cut and dry? And I *could* write this book. Unless I deceive myself, I could even write it pretty adequately. I feel as if I was really in it; and knew the game thoroughly. You see what comes of trying to write an essay on Burns in ten columns.

\* The letter breaks off here.

Meantime, when I have done Burns, I shall finish Charles of Orleans (who is in a good way, about the fifth month, I should think, and promises to be a fine healthy child, better than any of his elder brothers for a while); and then perhaps a Villon, for Villon is a very essential part of my *Ramsay-Fergusson-Burns*; I mean, is a note in it, and will recur again and again for comparison and illustration; then, perhaps, I may try Fontainebleau, by the way. But so soon as *Charles of Orleans* is polished off, and immortalised for ever, he and his pipings, in a solid imperishable shrine of R. L. S., my true aim and end will be this little book. Suppose I could jerk you out 100 *Cornhill* pages; that would easy make 200 pages of decent form; and then thickish paper—eh? would that do? I daresay it could be made bigger; but I know what 100 pages of copy, bright consummate copy, imply behind the scenes of weary manuscibing; I think if I put another nothing to it, I should not be outside the mark; and 100 *Cornhill* pages of 500 words means, I fancy (but I never was good at figures), means 50,000 words. There's a prospect for an idle young gentleman who lives at home at ease! The future is thick with inky fingers. And then perhaps nobody would publish. *Ah nom de dieu!* What do you think of all this? will it paddle, think you?

I hope this pen will write; it is the third I have tried.

About coming up, no, that's impossible; for I am worse than a bankrupt. I have at the present six shillings and a penny; I have a sounding lot of bills for Christmas; new dress suit, for instance, the old one having gone for Parliament House; and new white shirts to live up to my new profession; I'm as gay and swell and gummy as can be; only all my boots leak, one pair water, and the other two simple black mud; so that my rig is more for the eye than a very solid comfort to myself. That is my budget. Dismal enough, and no prospect of any coin coming in; at least for months. So that here I am, I almost fear, for the winter; certainly till after Christmas, and then it depends on how my bills "turn out" whether it shall not be till spring. So, meantime, I must whistle in my cage.



My cage is better by one thing ; I am an Advocate now. If you ask me why that makes it better, I would remind you that in the most distressing circumstances a little consequence goes a long way, and even bereaved relatives stand on precedence round the coffin. I idle finely. I read Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Martin's *History of France*, Allan Ramsay, Olivier Basselin, all sorts of rubbish *à propos* of Burns, *Commines*, *Juvénal des Ursins*, etc. I walk about the Parliament House five forenoons a week, in wig and gown ; I have either a five or six mile walk, or an hour or two hard skating on the rink, every afternoon, without fail.

I have not written much ; but, like the seaman's parrot in the tale, I have thought a deal. You have never, by the way, returned me either *Spring* or *Béranger*, which is certainly a d—d shame. I always comforted myself with that when my conscience pricked me about a letter to you. " Thus conscience "—O no, that's not appropriate in this connection.—Ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I say, is there any chance of your coming north this year ? Mind you that promise is now more respectable for age than is becoming.

R. L. S.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

The following epistle in verse, with its mixed flavour of Burns and Horace, gives a lively picture of winter forenoons spent in the Parliament House :—

[*Edinburgh, October, 1875*]

Noo lyart leaves blaw ower the green,  
 Red are the bonny woods o' Dean,  
 An' here we're back in Embro, freen',  
     To pass the winter.  
 Whilk noo, wi' frosts afore, draws in,  
 An' snaws ahint her.

I've seen's hae days to fricht us a',  
The Pentlands poothered weel wi' snaw,  
The ways, half-smooored wi' liquid thaw,  
An' half-congealin',  
The snell an' scowtherin' norther blaw  
Frae blae Brunteelan'.

I've seen's been unco sweir to sally,  
And at the door-cheeks daff an' dally,  
Seen's daidle thus an' shilly-shally  
For near a minute—  
Sae cauld the wind blew up the valley,  
The deil was in it!—

Syne spread the silk an' tak the gate,  
In blast an' blaudin' rain, deil hae't!  
The hale toon glintin', stane an' slate,  
Wi' cauld an' weet,  
An' to the Court, gin we'se be late,  
Bicker oor feet.

And at the Court, tae, aft I saw  
Whaur Advocates by twa an' twa  
Gang gesterin' end to end the ha'  
In weeg an' goon,  
To crack o' what he wull but Law  
The hale forenoon.

That muckle ha', maist like a kirk,  
I've kent at braid mid-day sae mirk  
Ye'd seen white weegs an' faces lurk  
Like ghaists frae Hell,  
But whether Christian ghaists or Turk  
Deil ane could tell.

The three fires lunted in the gloom,  
The wind blew like the blast o' doom,  
The rain upo' the roof abune  
Played Peter Dick—  
Ye wad nae'd licht enough i' the room  
Your teeth to pick!

But, freend, ye ken how me an' you,  
 The ling-lang lanely winter through,  
 Keep'd a guid speerit up, an' true  
     To lore Horatian,  
 We aye the ither bottle drew  
     To inclination.

Sae let us in the comin' days  
 Stand sicker on our auncient ways—  
 The strauchtest road in a' the maze  
     Since Eve ate apples ;  
 An' let the winter weet our cla'es—  
     We'll weet our thrapples.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The two following letters refer to an essay *On the Spirit of Spring* which I was careless enough to lose in the process of a change of rooms at Cambridge. The *Petits Poèmes en Prose* were attempts, not altogether successful, in the form though not in the spirit of Baudelaire.

Swanston [Autumn 1875]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thanks. Only why don't you tell me if I can get my *Spring* printed? I want to print it; because it's nice, and genuine to boot, and has got less side on than my other game. Besides I want coin badly.

I am writing *Petits Poèmes en Prose*. Their principal resemblance to Baudelaire's is that they are rather longer and not quite so good. They are ve-ry cle-ver (words of two syllables), O so aw-ful-ly cle-ver (words of three), O so dam-na-bly cle-ver (words of a devil of a number of syllables). I have written fifteen in a fortnight. I have also written some beautiful poetry. I would like a cake and a cricket-bat; and a passkey to Heaven if you please, and as much money as my friend the Baron Rothschild can spare. I used to look across to Rothschild of a morning when we were brushing our hair, and say—(this is quite true, only we were on the opposite side of the street, and though I used to look over I cannot say I ever detected the



beggar, he feared to meet my eagle eye)—well, I used to say to him, “Rothschild, old man, lend us five hundred francs,” and it is characteristic of Rothy’s dry humour that he used never to reply when it was a question of money. He was a very humorous dog indeed, was Rothy. Heigh-ho! those happy old days. Funny, funny fellow, the dear old Baron.

How’s that for genuine American wit and humour? Take notice of this in your answer; say, for instance, “Even although the letter had been unsigned, I could have had no difficulty in guessing who was my dear, *lively, witty* correspondent. Yours, Letitia Languish.”

O!—my mind has given way. I have gone into a mild, babbling, sunny idiocy. I shall buy a Jew’s harp and sit by the roadside with a woman’s bonnet on my manly head begging my honest livelihood. Meantime, adieu.

I would send you some of these *PP. Poèmes* of mine, only I know you would never acknowledge receipt or return them.—Yours, and Rothschild’s,

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Edinburgh, Autumn 1875*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—*Fous ne me gombrennez pas.* Angry with you? No. Is the thing lost? Well, so be it. There is one masterpiece fewer in the world. The world can ill spare it, but I, sir, I (and here I strike my hollow bosom so that it resounds) I am full of this sort of bauble; I am made of it; it comes to me, sir, as the desire to sneeze comes upon poor ordinary devils on cold days, when they should be getting out of bed and into their horrid cold tubs by the light of a seven o’clock candle, with the dismal seven o’clock frost-flowers all over the window.

Show Stephen what you please; if you could show him how to give me money, you would oblige, sincerely yours,  
R. L. S.

I have a scroll of *Springtime* somewhere, but I know that it is not in very good order, and do not feel myself up to

very much grind over it. I am damped about *Springtime*, that's the truth of it. It might have been four or five quid !

Sir, I shall shave my head, if this goes on. All men take a pleasure to gird at me. The laws of nature are in open war with me. The wheel of a dog-cart took the toes off my new boots. Gout has set in with extreme rigour, and cut me out of the cheap refreshment of beer. I leant my back against an oak, I thought it was a trusty tree, but first it bent, and syne—it lost the Spirit of Springtime, and so did Professor Sidney Colvin, Trinity College, to me.—Ever yours.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Along with this, I send you some P. P. P.'s ; if you lose them, you need not seek to look upon my face again. Do, for God's sake, answer me about them also ; it is a horrid thing for a fond architect to find his monuments received in silence.—Yours,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[*Edinburgh, November 14, 1875*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Since I got your letter I have been able to do a little more work, and I have been much better contented with myself ; but I can't get away, that is absolutely prevented by the state of my purse and my debts, which, I may say, are red like crimson. I don't know how I am to clear my hands of them, nor when, not before Christmas anyway. Yesterday I was twenty-five ; so please wish me many happy returns—directly. This one was not *unhappy* anyway. I have got back a good deal into my old random, little-thought way of life, and do not care whether I read, write, speak, or walk, so long as I do something. I have a great delight in this wheel-skating ; I have made great advance in it of late, can do a good many amusing things (I mean amusing in *my* sense—amusing to do). You know, I lose all my forenoons at Court ! So it



is, but the time passes ; it is a great pleasure to sit and hear cases argued or advised. This is quite autobiographical, but I feel as if it was some time since we met, and I can tell you, I am glad to meet you again. In every way, you see, but that of work the world goes well with me. My health is better than ever it was before ; I get on without any jar, nay, as if there never had been a jar, with my parents. If it weren't about that work, I'd be happy. But the fact is, I don't think—the fact is, I'm going to trust in Providence about work. If I could get one or two pieces I hate out of my way all would be well, I think ; but these obstacles disgust me, and as I know I ought to do them first, I don't do anything. I must finish this off, or I'll just lose another day. I'll try to write again soon.—Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

The review of Robert Browning's *Inn Album* here mentioned appears in *Vanity Fair*, Dec. 11, 1875. The matter of the poem is praised ; the "slating" is only for the form and metres.

[*Edinburgh, December, 1875*]

WELL, I am hardy ! Here I am in the midst of this great snowstorm, sleeping with my window open and *smoking* in my cold tub in the morning so as it would do your heart good to see. Moreover I am in pretty good form otherwise. *Fontainebleau* lags ; it has turned out more difficult than I expected in some places, but there is a deal of it ready, and (I think) straight.

I was at a concert on Saturday and heard Hallé and Norman Neruda play that Sonata of Beethoven's you remember, and I felt very funny. But I went and took a long spanking walk in the dark and got quite an appetite for dinner. I did ; that's not bragging.

As you say, a concert wants to be gone to *with* someone, and I know who. I have done rather an amusing paragraph or two for *Vanity Fair* on the *Inn Album*. I have

slated R. B. pretty handsomely. I am in a desperate hurry ;  
so good-bye.—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. DE MATTOS

The state of health and spirits mentioned in the last letter soon gave way to one of the fits of depression, frequent with him in Edinburgh winters. In the following letter he unbosoms himself to a favourite cousin (sister to R. A. M. Stevenson).

[Edinburgh, January, 1876]

MY DEAR KATHARINE,—The prisoner reserved his defence. He has been seedy, however ; principally sick of the family evil, despondency ; the sun is gone out utterly ; and the breath of the people of this city lies about as a sort of damp, unwholesome fog, in which we go walking with bowed hearts. If I understand what is a contrite spirit, I have one ; it is to feel that you are a small jar, or rather, as I feel myself, a very large jar, of pottery work rather *mal réussi*, and to make every allowance for the potter (I beg pardon ; Potter with a capital P.) on his ill-success, and rather wish he would reduce you as soon as possible to potsherds. However, there are many things to do yet before we go

*" Grossir la pâte universelle  
Faite des formes que Dieu fond."*

For instance, I have never been in a revolution yet. I pray God I may be in one at the end, if I am to make a mucker. The best way to make a mucker is to have your back set against a wall and a few lead pellets whiffed into you in a moment, while yet you are all in a heat and a fury of combat, with drums sounding on all sides, and people crying, and a general smash like the infernal orchestration at the end of the *Huguenots*. . . .

Please pardon me for having been so long of writing, and show your pardon by writing soon to me ; it will be a kindness, for I am sometimes very dull. Edinburgh is much changed for the worse by the absence of Bob ; and this



damned weather weighs on me like a curse. Yesterday, or the day before, there came so black a rain squall that I was frightened—what a child would call frightened, you know, for want of a better word—although in reality it has nothing to do with fright. I lit the gas and sat cowering in my chair until it went away again.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O, I am trying my hand at a novel just now ; it may interest you to know, I am bound to say I do not think it will be a success. However, it's an amusement for the moment, and work, work is your only ally against the "bearded people" that squat upon their hams in the dark places of life and embrace people horribly as they go by. God save us from the bearded people ! to think that the sun is still shining in some happy places !

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

[Edinburgh, January, 1876]

. . . OUR weather continues as it was, bitterly cold, and raining often. There is not much pleasure in life certainly as it stands at present. *Nous n'irons plus aux bois, hélas !*

I meant to write some more last night, but my father was ill and it put it out of my way. He is better this morning.

If I had written last night, I should have written a lot. But this morning I am so dreadfully tired and stupid that I can say nothing. I was down at Leith in the afternoon. God bless me, what horrid women I saw ; I never knew what a plain-looking race it was before. I was sick at heart with the looks of them. And the children, filthy and ragged ! And the smells ! And the fat black mud !

My soul was full of disgust ere I got back. And yet the ships were beautiful to see, as they are always ; and on the pier there was a clean cold wind that smelt a little of the sea, though it came down the Firth, and the sunset had a



certain *éclat* and warmth. Perhaps if I could get more work done, I should be in a better trim to enjoy filthy streets and people and cold grim weather ; but I don't much feel as if it was what I would have chosen. I am tempted every day of my life to go off on another walking tour. I like that better than anything else that I know.—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Fontainebleau* is the paper called *Forest Notes* which appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in May of this year (reprinted in *Essays of Travel*). 'The Winter's Walk, as far as it goes one of the most charming of his essays of the Road, was for some reason never finished ; reprinted *ibidem*.

[Edinburgh, February, 1876]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—1st. I have sent *Fontainebleau* long ago, long ago. And Leslie Stephen is worse than tepid about it—liked "some parts " of it " very well," the son of Belial. Moreover, he proposes to shorten it ; and I, who want *money*, and money soon, and not glory and the illustration of the English language, I feel as if my poverty were going to consent.

2nd. I'm as fit as a fiddle after my walk. I am four inches bigger about the waist than last July ! There, that's your prophecy did that. I am on *Charles of Orleans* now, but I don't know where to send him. Stephen obviously spews me out of his mouth, and I spew him out of mine, so help me ! A man who doesn't like my *Fontainebleau* ! His head must be turned.

3rd. If ever you do come across my *Spring* (I beg your pardon for referring to it again, but I don't want you to forget) send it off at once.

4th. I went to Ayr, Maybole, Girvan, Ballantrae, Stranraer, Glenluce, and Wigton. I shall make an article of it some day soon, *A Winter's Walk in Carrick and Galloway*. I had a good time.—Yours,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

[Edinburgh, Early Spring, 1876]

You may well say why ; but I can't answer. I had a favour to ask too, which—without further delay—I shall ask : please send me that piece of Augier's by post ; Henley wishes to see it.

I am in capital health, I have re-written a story with which I mean to try Blackwood ; I have written an article about the Raeburn Gallery, with which I am trying Stephen ; and I am about half-way done with another article with which I am to try Morley. So you see I have not been idle. Indeed, I am in a state of wonderful mental activity. My spirits are good. I am not thinking anything that I can help, except about my work. There's work and thinking for you. Will you be angry if I send such a scrap ? I wish to catch the post to-day, and my back is aching so that I can't write more. I have been working since half-past nine this morning ; and have scrolled between five and six magazine pages. Don't suppose I am ever likely to forget you my dear friend, even if I am remiss. I rest in the thought of you so much now.

Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

None of the several writings mentioned in the above letter found any favour with editors. No story of Stevenson's ever appeared in *Blackwood*. Nothing of his appears about this date in *The Fortnightly*, of which Morley was then editor. His essay on Raeburn was declined with one consent by *Blackwood*, *The Pall Mall*, and *The Cornhill*, under the editorship though the last then was of a good friend of his, Leslie Stephen. To make amends, however, Stephen printed the papers *Walking Tours* and *Forest Notes* in *The Cornhill* for April and May of this same year.



## TO MRS. SITWELL

[Edinburgh, Early Spring, 1876]

MY DEAR MADONNA,—I don't know where and how I have been living this while back. I had a letter written to you some time ago, and burned it because I thought it nasty ; since when I have not been able to write any. I have now been three days in the house with sore throat, very painful, but not serious. This is the beginning of my third ; and except that I keep reading XVth Century, my mind is as loose as—as a fish in a river. I think I am now, if you know that old word under the sign of *Non-chaloir*. I am quite jolly, but I have lost my hold of life ; and so much the better, perhaps ; only as I did live earnestly for a while, the change is not easy. That is all there is to say about me. I hope my *Forest Notes* may be in *The Cornhill* by April, but it is no more than a hope for that date. I have written to-day a little piece on *Walking Tours* ; mais je ne le trouve pas bon.

Please let me hear how you all are. I have spent 2s. in the last fortnight, which is not extravagant.

“Quand on ne peut avoir ce que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a.” Ouida ! C'est très beau ça ; seulement—pas moyen !

Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

“Baynes” in the following is Stevenson's good friend and mine, the late Professor Spencer Baynes, who was just relinquishing the editorship of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by reason of ill-health.

[Swanston, July, 1876]

HERE I am, here, and very well too. I am glad you liked *Walking Tours* ; I like it too ; I think it's prose ; and I own with contrition that I have not always written prose. However, I am “endeavouring after new obedience”

(Scot. Shorter Catechism). You don't say aught of *Forest Notes*, which is kind. There is one, if you will, that was too sweet to be wholesome.

I am at *Charles d'Orleans*. About fifteen *Cornhill* pages have already couléd from under my facile plume—no, I mean eleven, fifteen of MS.—and we are not much more than half-way through, Charles and I; but he's a pleasant companion. My health is very well; I am in a fine exercisy state. Baynes is gone to London; if you see him, inquire about my *Burns*. They have sent me £5, 5s. for it, which has mollified me horrid. £5, 5s. is a good deal to pay for a read of it in MS.; I can't complain.—Yours,  
R. L. S.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

This dates from just before the canoeing trip recounted in the *Inland Voyage*.

[*Swanston, July and August, 1876*]

WELL, here I am at last; it is a Sunday, blowing hard, with a grey sky with the leaves flying; and I have nothing to say. I ought to have no doubt; since it's so long since last I wrote; but there are times when people's lives stand still. If you were to ask a squirrel in a mechanical cage for his autobiography, it would not be very gay. Every spin may be amusing in itself, but is mighty like the last; you see I compare myself to a lighthearted animal; and indeed I have been in a very good humour. For the weather has been passable; I have taken a deal of exercise, and done some work. But I have the strangest repugnance for writing; indeed, I have nearly got myself persuaded into the notion that letters don't arrive, in order to salve my conscience for never sending them off. I'm reading a great deal of fifteenth century: *Trial of Joan of Arc*, *Paston Letters*, *Basin*,\* etc., also Boswell daily by way of a Bible; I mean to read Boswell now until the day I die. And now and again a bit of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Is that all? Yes, I

\* Thomas Basin or Bazin, the historian of Charles VIII and Louis XI.



think that's all. I have a thing in proof for the *Cornhill* called *Virginibus Puerisque*. *Charles of Orleans* is again laid aside, but in a good state of furtherance this time. A paper called *A Defence of Idlers* (which is really a defence of R. L. S.) is in a good way. So, you see, I am busy in a tumultuous, knotless sort of fashion ; and as I say, I take lots of exercise, and I'm as brown as a berry.

This is the first letter I've written for—O I don't know how long.

*July 30th.*—This is, I suppose, three weeks after I began. Do, please, forgive me.

To the Highlands, first, to the Jenkins', then to Antwerp ; thence, by canoe with Simpson, to Paris and Grez (on the Loing, and an old acquaintance of mine on the skirts of Fontainebleau) to complete our cruise next spring (if we're all alive and jolly) by Loing and Loire, Saone and Rhone to the Mediterranean. It should make a jolly book of gossip, I imagine.

God bless you.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

*P.S.*—*Virginibus Puerisque* is in August *Cornhill*. *Charles of Orleans* is finished, and sent to Stephen ; *Idlers* ditto, and sent to Grove ; but I've no word of either. So I've not been idle.

R. L. S.

With these last letters a chapter in Stevenson's life can be felt to be closing. The day was approaching when he was ready, a character formed and firm, to stand on his own feet for the future. In compliance with his father's wish he had passed for the English Bar in the summer of 1875 ; but this had been barely more than a matter of form, and it was tacitly accepted that literature should be his real and working vocation. He was left master, within such limits as his finances made possible, of his own movements ; and naturally relied less entirely than before on the sympathy and guidance of his first friends, although without the

least breach of his affection for them or of intimate confidence in them upon occasion. He spent more of his time each year in France, especially frequenting, in the company of his cousin "Bob," Barbizon and the other artist haunts in the forest of Fontainebleau. There in the summer of 1876 he met the American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, whom he presently determined to make his wife. Under the circumstances of her life and his, to realise that determination made a new call on all the grit and strength of will in his nature. He succeeded, and the world knows how stimulating a companion, and how devoted a nurse and critic, Stevenson had thenceforward in his wife. In the period of trial and difficulty which preceded it, Mrs. Sitwell remained as closely as ever his trusted friend and helper, and now and again at need an intermediary between himself and his father. But their occasions for the interchange of letters became fewer, and from the date of Stevenson's expedition to California and return as a married man in 1879, the lady became, of the pair, Mrs. Sitwell's far more frequent correspondent.

Acc. no: 2256

### TO W. E. HENLEY

In a well-known passage of the *Inland Voyage*, the following incident is related to the same purport, but in another style:—

[Chauny, Aisne, September, 1876]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Here I am, you see; and if you will take to a map, you will observe I am already more than two doors from Antwerp, whence I started. I have fought it through under the worst weather I ever saw in France; I have been wet through nearly every day of travel since the second (inclusive); besides this, I have had to fight against pretty mouldy health; so that, on the whole, the essayist and reviewer has shown, I think, some pluck. Four days ago I was not a hundred miles from being miserably drowned, to the immense regret of a large circle of friends and the permanent impoverishment of British Essayism



and Reviewery. My boat culbutted me under a fallen tree in a very rapid current : and I was a good while before I got on to the outside of that fallen tree ; rather a better while than I cared about. When I got up, I lay some time on my belly, panting, and exuded fluid. All my symptoms *jusqu'ici* are trifling. But I've a damned sore throat.—  
Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Hôtel du Grand Cerf  
Dubec-Lebreton, Pontoise  
Sept. 16 [1876]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have found two dispirited post-cards here, and a *Courant* which was speedily dismembered and has been read eagerly down to the Theatre advertisements. Beg pardon, one was dispirited : being yours. The other was a bold desperado postcard from my father ; anent a proof of mine, which he has carefully violated as usual. That proof you will please to forward, 4, Rue Racine, Paris. You see the vagueness of my mind ; but I have a considerable thirst for The Français and a town after all this wild week in the rain ; and I believe I may stay a week in Paris. Work is my great passion, for the hour. O for a room with a table, and to sit down to work ! I have plenty fortunately that I can do.

The last day or so have been very beautiful and quiet, and somewhat repayed us for the past. Soft, grey weather, with misty sunshine and a little rain ; a very rich and pleasant valley, diversified with a great many villages ; and all along the sides of the river, washerwomen and fishers, all in blue, and all in such excellent spirits ! The water is as smooth as oil and marbled with clouds ; and on all hands there is the clap-clap of the battons, and as we come near the bank cheerful salutations. Can you find out whether Dick has sent me any letters ? I expected some through him, and behold, they are not.

Ever afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Paris**[January 10, 1877, 5 Rue Douay]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—The weather here continues enchanting ; like Spring ; how long will it last ? I believe I am growing fat and rosy ; certainly if warmth, calm and idleness should fatten and roseate, I am enjoying them all. The worst of it is my life is so very empty, that I have nothing to write of. I am in a new quarter, and flâne about in a leisurely way. I dine every day in a Crêmerie with a party of Americans, one Irishman and sometimes an English lady : elderly, very prim, a widow with a son in the army and married daughters. Poor woman ! It is rather a pitiful story. She half quarrelled with all her family in order to come over here and study art ; and now she can't do it, feels herself like a fish out of water in the life, and yet is ashamed to give in and go back.

Bob is in a great quandary about my father's picture. He has made a replica which he thinks in some ways scarce so good as the original, and has not been able to push into more detail. The *place* is pulled down ; so he can make no more studies. He thinks of sending it (the replica) along with some others ; perhaps some of them might please. One that he thought of sending, Uncle David came in and bought from Aunt Alan in Bob's absence. However I do not think my father would have cared much about it. Love to all.

Ever your afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO MRS. SITWELL

Part of *The Hair Trunk* existed in 1912, and I believe still exists, in MS. It contains some tolerable fooling, but is chiefly interesting from the fact that the seat of the proposed Bohemian



colony from Cambridge is to be in the Navigator Islands ; showing the direction which had been given to Stevenson's thoughts by the conversation of the New Zealand official, Mr. Seed, two years before.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, May, 1877

. . . A PERFECT chorus of repudiation is sounding in my ears ; and although you say nothing, I know you must be repudiating me, all the same. Write I cannot—there's no good mincing matters, a letter frightens me worse than the devil ; and I am just as unfit for correspondence as if I had never learned the three R.'s.

Let me give my news quickly before I relapse into my usual idleness. I have a terror lest I should relapse before I get this finished. Courage, R. L. S. On Leslie Stephen's advice, I gave up the idea of a book of essays. He said he didn't imagine I was rich enough for such an amusement ; and moreover, whatever was worth publication was worth republication. So the best of those I had ready, *An Apology for Idlers*, is in proof for the *Cornhill*. I have *Villon* to do for the same magazine, but God knows when I'll get it done, for drums, trumpets—I'm engaged upon—trumpets, drums—a novel ! “The HAIR TRUNK ; OR, THE IDEAL COMMONWEALTH.” It is a most absurd story of a lot of young Cambridge fellows who are going to found a new society, with no ideas on the subject, and nothing but Bohemian tastes in the place of ideas ; and who are—well, I can't explain about the trunk—it would take too long—but the trunk is the fun of it—everybody steals it ; burglary, marine fight, life on desert island on west coast of Scotland, sloops, etc. The first scene where they make their grand schemes and get drunk is supposed to be very funny, by Henley. I really saw him laugh over it until he cried.

Please write to me although I deserve it so little, and show a Christian spirit.—Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO MR. KINGERO

This correspondent was a Japanese gentleman whose acquaintance Stevenson had made in France, and who was anxious to learn his views on the state of European politics.

*17 Heriot Row, July 25, 1877.*

MY DEAR MR. KINGERO,—I thank you heartily for the trouble you have taken ; my mother is greatly delighted and begs to add her thanks and remembrances. . . .

The war between Russia and Turkey has indeed begun, and hangs in a queer state. The Russians, who are brutal fighters, and hold all war as a sort of forlorn hope to be carried against reason by sacrifice of life, carried all before them for a while. But in Asia they have been swept back again to their own frontier with many disasters. In Turkey, they seem to be more successful, and after all, numbers must tell in the long run ; so I suppose the Turks must go to the wall. I shall greatly regret it, for one.

In France, you will doubtless have heard that Marshal President MacMahon has discharged the Republican ministry, dissolved the Chamber, and put in a tag-rag ministry of his own, all pointing to the recall of the Bonapartes, and all executed with circumstances of small tyranny and sublime stupidity which made it the more irritating to the country. His popularity seems quite extinct. There was a review the other day while I was in Paris, and scarcely a cheer was given him by the people. I may add, another little sign of the times : that among the foreign generals who were present, the English and the Turkish General seemed to keep together all day.

I am glad to hear you are so well employed. You make me feel a little ashamed of the small matter that I can find to do. It is a very fine thing to be born at a moment of your country's history, when there are such great things to be done for her ; and above all, to be able to do them. But this is what incapacity always thinks. If I were worth my meat, I could look round on this old country of mine,



and find some great want to supply, or some pertinent word that should be spoken ; and so see my own work as plainly as you can see yours.

Jevons' Logic is a good piece of work ; and I am delighted to know that you have still the stories before you. Remember to command me in anything I can do about them. These are not words, of course, you understand. I am really as much interested in that idea as you can be yourself ; perhaps since it is I who am to learn, even more so.

Our papers are all full of the movement of troops and the equipment of ironclads. Before long, we may also be in a war, without very clearly knowing why. But I daresay you will wish us well in it, for the sake of your Scotch and English friends. Remember I shall always be glad to hear the news from Japan ; it is a country that we all take great interest in, even when we have no friends there ; and so, if I have not altogether disgusted you of your correspondence by this dull letter, I shall hope to hear of its progress from time to time through you.

My father has gone to the North on business ; and yesterday I married a friend of mine—I mean I was present at his marriage—whom you once met at Swanston : a funny fellow called Baxter. These kinds of ceremonies make me feel unpleasantly old ; and perhaps the gloominess of our diversions on which I remember you used to remark, is nowhere shown to such advantage as at a marriage. Another point in our country, which is even gloomier than our amusements, is the climate—and really I must congratulate you on being safe in Japan. Never have we had so deplorable a summer. It has positively rained every day since spring came in ; and we have had something of the nature of a gale, either from East or West, every week for nine months.

My two cousins, Davie and Charlie, have made a professional tour of some weeks in the United States of America, which they seem to have enjoyed very well. But they complained of the heat : a complaint which I can never understand. I have been complaining of the cold ever since I was born ; and if this is the sort of weather we are

to have, I suppose I shall go on complaining of the cold until once I get warmly into my grave.

With best thanks and wishes from father and mother and myself, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[Edinburgh, August, 1877]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I'm to be whipped away to-morrow to Penzance, where at the post-office a letter will find me glad and grateful. I am well, but somewhat tired out with over-work. I have only been home a fortnight this morning, and I have already written to the tune of forty-five *Cornhill* pages and upwards. The most of it was only very laborious re-casting and remodelling, it is true ; but it took it out of me famously, all the same.

*Temple Bar* appears to like my *Villon*, so I may count on another market there in the future, I hope. At least, I am going to put it to the proof at once, and send another story, *The Sire de Malétroit's Mousetrap* : a true novel, in the old sense ; all unities preserved moreover, if that's anything, and I believe with some little merits ; not so *clever* perhaps as the last, but sounder and more natural.

My *Villon* is out this month ; I should so much like to know what you think of it. Stephen has written to me àpropos of *Idlers*, that something more in that vein would be agreeable to his views. From Stephen I count that a devil of a lot.

I am honestly so tired this morning, that I hope you will take this for what it's worth and give me an answer in peace.—Ever yours,

LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

Neither the *Stepfather's Story* nor the *St. Michael's Mounts* essay here mentioned, ever, to my knowledge, came into being :



the title of the other story got changed to *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*.

[Penzance, August, 1877]

. . . You will do well to stick to your burn, that is a delightful life you sketch, and a very fountain of health. I wish I could live like that, but, alas ! it is just as well I got my *Idlers* written and done with, for I have quite lost all power of resting. I have a goad in my flesh continually, pushing me to work, work, work. I have an essay pretty well through for Stephen ; a story, *The Sire de Malétroit's Mousetrap*, with which I shall try *Temple Bar* ; another story, in the clouds, *The Stepfather's Story*, most pathetic work of a high morality or immorality, according to point of view ; and lastly, also in the clouds, or perhaps a little farther away, an essay on *The Two St. Michael's Mounts*, historical and picturesque ; perhaps if it didn't come too long, I might throw in the *Bass Rock*, and call it *Three Sea Fortalices*, or something of that kind. You see how work keeps bubbling in my mind. Then I shall do another fifteenth century paper this autumn—*La Sale and Petit Jehan de Saintré*, which is a kind of fifteenth century *Sandford and Merton*, ending in horrid immoral cynicism, as if the author had got tired of being didactic, and just had a good wallow in the mire to wind up with and indemnify himself for so much restraint.

Cornwall is not much to my taste, being as bleak as the bleakest parts of Scotland, and nothing like so pointed and characteristic. It has a flavour of its own, though, which I may try and catch, if I find the space, in the proposed article. *Will o' the Mill* I sent, red hot, to Stephen in a fit of haste, and have not yet had an answer. I am quite prepared for a refusal. But I begin to have more hope in the story line, and that should improve my income anyway. I am glad you liked *Villon* ; some of it was not as good as it ought to be, but on the whole it seems pretty vivid, and the features strongly marked. Vividness and not style is now my line ; style is all very well, but vividness is the real line of country ; if a thing is meant to be read, it seems just as well to try and make it readable. I am such a dull

person now, I cannot keep off my own immortal works. Indeed, they are scarcely ever out of my head. And yet I value them less and less every day. But occupation is the great thing ; so that a man should have his life in his own pocket, and never be thrown out of work by anything. I am glad to hear you are better. I must stop—going to Land's End.—Always your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

[October 10, 1877]  
*Maison Lavenue, Paris*

MY DEAR FATHER,—What you say is quite true. I do not seem to be very anxious to write to you but it is not so easy to write with a bad eye ; for my eye continues to be a little bit of a nuisance. I walk about Paris and can neither read nor write ; but the bustle in the street amuses me vastly ; and as I am living along with some fellows and we partly make our own food, I have great fun going marketing.

The elections are coming on and Paris is full of the strangest manifestoes from this or the other candidate. Some—mostly the republicans—simply state their name and that they have been one of the majority turned out by the Marshal.

The others, the so-called conservatives—have a big poster of statements here and there, backwards and forwards, some of them about personal qualifications, some of them about the Marshal's policy. It is altogether a curious spectacle for an Englishman ; and most curious of all, the troops are pouring in hour by hour, drums beating and the tricolor at a bayonet end, to protect the freedom of elections. Is it not a strange land and a strange state of society ?

Above all these troops being marched in with the flag of the republic, to intimidate republicans, seems to me a curious sign of the time, and you will surely be surprised to hear that up to the present day (or at least five days ago,



when I heard it seriously repeated) the Marseillaise and "Vive la République" are supposed by the peasantry to be the songs proscribed in Republican France.

The weather is charming, and I am capital in health generally.

Please ask my mother to forward my quarter's allowance to 5 Rue Ravignan, Paris.

Ever your afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[Paris, October 15, 1877]

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I was just raging against France, and praising the institutions of my native land, when in came Mr. Dick's letter containing 25 quid (of which I hereby gratefully acknowledge receipt), with the news that it was snowing in Edinburgh. Why, here, it is so warm that we drive about at night in open cabs; I think I prefer misgovernment to bad weather.

Yesterday (Sunday, 14th) was a critical day. On Saturday, the *Gaulois* had an article telling the people to go from the polling booth to the barricades. Sunday morning, as I was out getting chocolate, I found two new manifestoes on the walls. One from a private person, editor of a radical journal, calling on the people to be calm, and rest on the weight of their majority. The other, a declaration of the President's, which made me so mad I could have broken his head if he had been within my reach. It was written, I firmly believe, with the intention of driving on the republicans to extremities, and shook the cat in the air with a sort of paternal menace, that must have been maddening to the opposition.

Last night, Paris was quite quiet. The Boulevard des Italiens was full of people from wall to wall. The other quarters full of sentries and police agents, but much deserted by the people.

To-day, the Republican majority seems assured ; and it only remains to be seen what the Marshal will do.

Ever your afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO A. PATCHETT MARTIN

This correspondent, living at the time in Australia, was, I believe, the first to write and seek Stevenson's acquaintance from admiration of his work, meaning especially the *Cornhill* essays of the *Virginibus Puerisque* series so far as they had yet appeared. The "present" herein referred to is Mr. Martin's volume called *A Sweet Girl Graduate and Other Poems* (Melbourne, 1876).

[*Edinburgh ? Late Autumn, 1877*]

DEAR SIR,—It would not be very easy for me to give you any idea of the pleasure I found in your present. People who write for the magazines (probably from a guilty conscience) are apt to suppose their works practically unpublished. It seems unlikely that any one would take the trouble to read a little paper buried among so many others ; and reading it, read it with any attention or pleasure. And so, I can assure you, your little book, coming from so far, gave me all the pleasure and encouragement in the world.

I suppose you know and remember Charles Lamb's essay on distant correspondents ? Well, I was somewhat of his way of thinking about my mild productions. I did not indeed imagine they were read, and (I suppose I may say) enjoyed right round upon the other side of the big Football we have the honour to inhabit. And as your present was the first sign to the contrary, I feel I have been very ungrateful in not writing earlier to acknowledge the receipt. I daresay, however, you hate writing letters as much as I can do myself (for if you like my article, I may presume other points of sympathy between us) ; and on this hypothesis you will be ready to forgive me the delay.

I may mention with regard to the piece of verses called *Such is Life* that I am not the only one on this side of the Football aforesaid to think it a good and bright piece of



work, and recognised a link of sympathy with the poets who "play in hostelryes at euchre."—Believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

R. L. S.

TO A. PATCHETT MARTIN

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [December, 1877]

MY DEAR SIR,—I am afraid you must already have condemned me for a very idle fellow truly. Here it is more than two months since I received your letter; I had no fewer than three journals to acknowledge; and never a sign upon my part. If you have seen a *Cornhill* paper of mine upon idling, you will be inclined to set it all down to that. But you will not be doing me justice. Indeed, I have had a summer so troubled that I have had little leisure and still less inclination to write letters. I was keeping the devil at bay with all my disposable activities; and more than once I thought he had me by the throat. The odd conditions of our acquaintance enable me to say more to you than I would to a person who lived at my elbow. And besides, I am too much pleased and flattered at our correspondence not to go as far as I can to set myself right in your eyes.

In this damnable confusion (I beg pardon) I have lost all my possessions, or near about, and quite lost all my wits. I wish I could lay my hands on the numbers of the *Review*, for I know I wished to say something on that head more particularly than I can from memory; but where they have escaped to, only time or chance can show. However, I can tell you so far, that I was very much pleased with the article on Bret Harte; it seemed to me just, clear, and to the point. I agreed pretty well with all you said about George Eliot: a high, but, may we not add?—a rather dry lady. Did you—I forget—did you have a kick at the stern works of that melancholy puppy and humbug Daniel Deronda himself?—the Prince of Prigs; the literary abomination of the nation in the way of manhood; a type which is

enough to make a man forswear the love of women, if that is how it must be gained. . . . Hats off all the same, you understand : a woman of genius.

Of your poems I have myself a kindness for *Noll and Nell*, although I don't think you have made it as good as you ought : verse five is surely not *quite melodious*. I confess I like the Sonnet in the last number of the *Review*—*the Sonnet to England*.

Please, if you have not, and I don't suppose you have, already read it, institute a search in all Melbourne for one of the rarest and certainly one of the best of books—*Clarissa Harlowe*. For any man who takes an interest in the problems of the two sexes, that book is a perfect mine of documents. And it is written, sir, with the pen of an angel. Miss Howe and Lovelace, words cannot tell how good they are ! And the scene where Clarissa beards her family, with her fan going all the while ; and some of the quarrel scenes between her and Lovelace ; and the scene where Colonel Marden goes to Mr. Hall, with Lord M. trying to compose matters, and the Colonel with his eternal “ finest woman in the world,” and the inimitable affirmation of Mobray—nothing, nothing could be better ! You will bless me when you read it for this recommendation ; but, indeed, I can do nothing but recommend *Clarissa*. I am like that Frenchman of the eighteenth century who discovered Habakkuk, and would give no one peace about that respectable Hebrew. For my part, I never was able to get over his eminently respectable name ; Isaiah is the boy, if you must have a prophet, no less. About *Clarissa*, I meditate a choice work : *A Dialogue on Man, Woman, and “ Clarissa Harlowe.”* It is to be so clever that no array of terms can give you any idea ; and very likely that particular array in which I shall finally embody it, less than any other.

Do you know, my dear sir, what I like best in your letter ? The egotism for which you thought necessary to apologise. I am a rogue at egotism myself ; and to be plain, I have rarely or never liked any man who was not. The first step to discovering the beauties of God's uni-



verse is usually a (perhaps partial) apprehension of such of them as adorn our own characters. When I see a man who does not think pretty well of himself, I always suspect him of being in the right. And besides, if he does not like himself, whom he has seen, how is he ever to like one whom he never can see but in dim and artificial presentments?

I cordially reciprocate your offer of a welcome; it shall be at least a warm one. Are you not my first, my only, admirer—a dear tie? Besides, you are a man of sense, and you treat me as one by writing to me as you do, and that gives me pleasure also. Please continue to let me see your work. I have one or two things coming out in the *Cornhill*: a story called *The Sire de Malétroit's Door* in *Temple Bar*; and a series of articles on Edinburgh in the *Portfolio*; but I don't know if these last fly all the way to Melbourne.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MR. KINGERO

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, 6th Dec., 1877

DEAR MR. KINGERO,—I should have long ago answered your letter, but I have newly returned from France, where I had many very pressing occupations and, in the thick of them, my eyes gave way so effectually that, for near a month, I could neither read nor write. They are better now, but must still be used with caution at night.

About pamphlets and the war, I am to write to a friend of mine in London, who has been all this while on the staff of a journal and obliged to keep himself well-informed. He will be able to advise me what I should send, so as to represent the two sides of opinion, which has run very high in England; and I hope to send you something by the mail following this.

I was in Paris during the elections for the Chamber, when a triumphant majority was returned, as of course you know, against that very bad, or very stupid, or else both,



person, Marshal MacMahon. It was an interesting time, you may imagine. On the morning of the elections, a manifesto of the President's came out. I was living at that time in what we call Bohemian style, buying and cooking my own food, and had occasion to go out early for some chocolate. When I read the proclamation, which was on all the walls, I would have beaten MacMahon with my cane. It was a scandalous attempt to insult the poor people and so drive them to the barricades : if that was not the intention of the document, it was either written by a man out of his mind, or I do not know the meaning of words when I see them.

They disappointed him for one while ; but how it is all to end, who can foresee ? I often have troubled moments over that ; it touches me more immediately than the butcheries in Turkey ; for I have very dear friends there, who may suffer inconvenience or even hurt.

I am so afraid of missing the post that I must here conclude. With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The *Inland Voyage*, it must be remembered, at this time just put into the publisher's hands, was the author's first book. The "Crane sketch" mentioned in the second of the following notes to me was the well-known frontispiece to that book on which Mr. Walter Crane was then at work. The essay, *Pan's Pipes*, printed in *London* for May 4 and reprinted in *Virginibus Puerisque*, was written about this time.

*Hôtel des Étrangers, Dieppe, January 1, 1878*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am at the *Inland Voyage* again : have finished another section, and have only two more to execute. But one at least of these will be very long—the longest in the book—being a great digression on French artistic tramps. I only hope Paul may take the thing ; I want coin so badly, and besides it would be something done

—something put outside of me and off my conscience ; and I should not feel such a muff as I do, if once I saw the thing in boards with a ticket on its back. I think I shall frequent circulating libraries a good deal. The Preface shall stand over, as you suggest, until the last, and then, sir, we shall see. This to be read with a big voice.

This is New Year's Day : let me, my dear Colvin, wish you a very good year, free of all misunderstanding and bereavement, and full of good weather and good work. You know best what you have done for me, and so you will know best how heartily I mean this.—Ever yours,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

Stevenson's father, the " Scotch Presbyterian " of the following letter, had been taken by Stevenson into confidence about the new complications of his life, and had just been to see his son in Paris. I was about to stay as his guest at the family home in Edinburgh, where I was under engagement to give a lecture.

[*Barbizon or Paris, Spring, 1878*]

I HAVE corrected 96 pages of my book in proof.

I am in bed ; for two days I was really very seriously ill ; and I am still very pale, very weak, very full of rheumatisms and rather a bad hand at passing the night. However, the doctor says there is nothing really very wrong. Indeed, it is a wonder either of us is alive. And my father, too ; after his journey here and back at his time of life ; but he seems quite well, and writes me the kindest letters.

I am sorry I shall not be in Edinburgh for Colvin. But I daresay he will not object to meet the Scotch Presbyterian who has been to Paris under such strange circumstances.

Please write, and take a short note from

An invalid, R. L. S.



## TO THOMAS STEVENSON

*Café de la Source, Bd. St. Michel,  
Paris, 15th Feb., 1878*

MY DEAR FATHER,—A thought has come into my head which I think would interest you. Christianity is among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life. Nothing is so difficult to specify as the position it occupies with regard to asceticism. It is not ascetic. Christ was of all doctors (if you will let me use the word) one of the least ascetic. And yet there is a theory of living in the Gospels which is curiously indefinable, and leans towards asceticism on one side, although it leans away from it on the other. In fact, asceticism is used therein as a means, not as an end. The wisdom of this world consists in making oneself very little in order to avoid many knocks ; in preferring others, in order that, even when we lose, we shall find some pleasure in the event ; in putting our desires outside of ourselves, in another ship, so to speak, so that, when the worst happens, there will be something left. You see, I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. People must be themselves, I suppose. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me ; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interests, to any different sphere. . . . I have had some sharp lessons and some very acute sufferings in these last seven-and-twenty years—more even than you would guess. I begin to grow an old man ; a little sharp, I fear, and a little close and unfriendly ; but still I have a good heart, and believe in myself and my fellow-men and the God who made us all. . . . There are not many sadder people in this world, perhaps, than I. I have my eye on a sickbed\* ; I have written letters to-day that it hurt me to write, and I fear it will hurt others to receive ; I am lonely and sick and out of heart. Well, I still hope ; I still believe ; I still see the

\* R. Glasgow Brown lay dying in the Riviera.



good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much, perhaps, but it is always something.

I find I have wandered a thousand miles from what I meant. It was this : of all passages bearing on Christianity in that form of a worldly wisdom, the most Christian, and so to speak, the key of the whole position, is the Christian doctrine of revenge. And it appears that this came into the world through Paul ! There is a fact for you. It was to speak of this that I began this letter ; but I have got into deep seas and must go on.

There is a fine text in the Bible, I don't know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. Strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or the other, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me to be. 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him.

This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy café ; but I had it on my heart to write it ; and, indeed, I was out of the humour for anything lighter.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations with you. But don't expect too much of me. Try to take me as I am. This is a rare moment, and I have profited by it ; but take it as a rare moment. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself *cornered*, I have a tendency to say the reverse.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Paris, Feb. 17, 1878

MY DEAR MOTHER,—My book has run to sheet Q. ; with my usual superstition I see a prophecy in that. People will think it *queer* and *questionable* ; and somebody will be

*querulous* about it—I can't think who that should be—O yes—Kegan Paul—it's not going to pay. The only other qu. I can think of is *Quintain*\* : does that mean I've missed it, I wonder, and am going to get the critical sand-bag on the side of my head? Try and think of more q's. Bob is home long ago; I only kept him till I could go about. I am much better indeed; but I cannot work too much time, I don't know why: I suppose I am still weak. I have now been four days writing a—preface; four weary days. Your last letter was very nice. How about Colvin? surely I should have heard details of his visit by this time: Satan reproving Sin. Isn't this a better sort of letter than my ordinary? The weather is still lovely; sun to-day into the bargain; I am overclad, but fear to take off a stitch. I also fear to leave my greatcoat; yet I cannot wear it; and so have to trudge with it over my arm.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This is an answer to my account of my visit to his parents, and expresses his ideas concerning the frontispiece which Walter Crane had been commissioned to design for the *Inland Voyage*.

[*Paris, February or March, 1878*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Many thanks for your letter. I was much interested by all the Edinburgh gossip. Most likely I shall arrive in London next week. I think you know all about the Crane sketch: but it should be a river, not a canal, you know, and the look should be “cruel, lewd, and kindly,” all at once. There is more sense in that Greek myth of Pan than in any other that I recollect except the luminous Hebrew one of the Fall: one of the biggest things done. If people would remember that all religions are no more than representations of life, they would find

\* I cannot guess what French word Stevenson can here have been thinking of, unless it was *quintal*, a hundred pounds weight (or colloquially any heavyweight).



them, as they are, the best representations, licking Shakespeare.

What an inconceivable cheese is Alfred de Musset ! His comedies are, to my view, the best work of France this century : a large order. Did you ever read them ? They are real, clear, living work.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

*Café Palais Royal, Paris [Early Spring, 1878]*

MADONNA, I am in a somewhat curious humour, as this way of writing indicates. God the Lord has been pleased to work a miracle for me once again ; once again, I am perfectly careless about life, God, death, immortality, fame, virtue, and company. The firm of insolubles may all go tapsalteerie, for all that I care : I might have written perhaps : the firm of insolvents. There is only one very good thing in the world : the acting of Sarah Bernhardt. I beg your pardon, there is another : Pierre Véron's *Panthéon de Poche*. I recognise also the merit of cold fish *à l'huile*, and Roussillon wine for breakfast. I have been reading John Racine : it is very standard—damned standard. I beg your pardon. I am going to try Peter Corneille next ; I hope he will not be *quite* so standard. I like John Racine, however ; the noise is very pleasing and as unintelligent and soothing as a mill wheel : occasionally too there are verses of a dignity !—Verses with Versailles wigs—pageant verses—like a Roman Triumph. All that will not interest you, Madame. To say truth, it does not interest me ; my only object is to fill up the geometrical figure of my letter. Foolish—*pas vrai* ? Nearly as foolish as a desire for a Rhine frontier. I shall go to Scotland, *au doux pays de mes aïeux*, in a fortnight or so. You may suppose that I am angry. Yes, I am ; very angry and bitter ; or rather very bitter and ~~not~~ angry. I have lost another pair of scales. I see life a good deal more naked and hollow. Good night.

Ever yours,

R. L. STEVENSON.



## TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Paris, 44 Bd. Haussmann,  
Friday, February 21, 1878*

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—Do you know who is my favourite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batten on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather, he never does, until he gets near the end, when he begins to wean you from him, so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry. I wonder if it's old age? It is a little, I am sure. A young person would get sickened by the dead level of meanness and cowardliness; you require to be a little spoiled and cynical before you can enjoy it. I have just finished *The Way of the World*; there is only one person in it—no, there are three—who are nice: the wild American woman, and two of the dissipated young men, Dolly and Lord Nidderdale. All the heroes and heroines are just ghastly. But what a triumph is Lady Carbury! That is real, sound, strong, genuine work: the man who could do that, if he had had courage, might have written a fine book; he has preferred to write many readable ones. I meant to write such a long, nice letter, but I cannot hold the pen.

R. L. S.

## TO THOMAS STEVENSON

I do not know to what periodical the references in this letter refer.

*[Paris, Early Spring, 1878]*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Thanks for your note. It was so nice, I don't know what to say to it; but you know I love you all in spite of the "mossoos" and you know, or you don't know, how much and how dearly I think of you, ever since I received a certain letter (of which this somehow reminded me) all about dogs and tobacco, when I was in Patmos at Mentone. We won't say any more about that: but we understand each other, don't we?

You are right about *Harold* and the *Salt Water Financier*, *Lord Beaconsfield* is Henley's : and I think the best thing there. The story I have not read. You are also right, Mrs. Thomas Stevenson, in your attribution of *Ouida*.

I would leave on Saturday but I have a visit I ought to pay in the country ; I should have gone on Monday, but I felt sick and was in bed that afternoon ; and as it is to an old man, not to say one who has been uniformly kind to me, I feel as if I ought to make it out. However, I am on the wing, and I'll be home soon, my dear good people, and try and behave better, if only I can. I'm sure I hope you'll have good weather for me ; see and do—there's a respectable pair.

Ever your most affectionate son,  
(and it's no phrase)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

" My book " in the postscript to this letter is *An Inland Voyage*, and the dedication is to me, S. C.

[*Gairloch, Easter, 1878*]  
*Patmos, Ash Wednesday*

I HAVE begun several letters to you, and ended by giving them up ; to say truth I was worried, and after trying around for a confidante, gave it up altogether and went without. I have been ill, and still am, but am on the mend. I cannot walk, cannot work, and am not very good at eating or the little internal chemistry that should follow thereafter.

Are you at home ? Are you well ? What's your news ?

I am staying with my people at Shandon Hydropathic Establishment, Gairloch, Clyde. I hate it and am dull, stupid, and a little wee bit gloomy between whiles. When I cannot work, cannot walk, and am not much in the humour to read, my ~~time~~ hangs upon my hands. I think I never feel so lonely as when I am too much with my father and mother, and I am ashamed of the feeling, which makes matters worse.



Be a good lady and write me a word. I am so tired of being ill. I kiss your hand with affection.

Don't imagine me worse than I am either in body or mind. I am only withered—suffer very little pain now, and hope, although somewhat chimerically, to get up and be myself again after each new night's rest.

Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

My book is through the Press. I have dedicated it as I said, Silence! for your life. I am so frightened lest he should find out.

I am so languid as hardly to reckon among men. And yet I believe a little happiness would pick me up at once. But it does not come my way in the meantime; it goes to others though; God bless them! When I see you, as I hope it may be given me soon, I shall explain the little mystery at the beginning of this note. F., in a letter which did me much good, sent you her love.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

[17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Summer, 1878]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here I am pretty well and all squared with my people. I know no way of thanking you for all you have done. Perhaps, after all, the confident trust with which I came to you was better than any thanks after the event. At least, so I try to think. I am afraid Fanny is not very bright in health, but she says she is taking care. And Fate has handled us so lightly hitherto, that I almost begin to think it means us well in the main. Her letter to me was mostly about you. Indeed you need be under no surprise if you have made a very enthusiastic friend of her. She could not honestly be less. Will you write and tell me how your cold has been getting on? And pray forgive my silence. There is a heavy nervous reaction after



my struggles and excitements, and I am so stupid and sluggish as to be hardly sane !

Ever your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The following refers to the newspaper criticisms on the *Inland Voyage* :—

*Hotel du Val de Grâce, Rue St. Jacques,  
Paris, Sunday [June, 1878]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—About criticisms, I was more surprised at the tone of the critics than I suppose any one else. And the effect it has produced in me is one of shame. If they liked that so much, I ought to have given them something better, that's all. And I shall try to do so. Still, it strikes me as odd ; and I don't understand the vogue. It should sell the thing.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Chez Morel, au Monastier, Haute Loire*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I heard that my father meant to give me coins for this little banishment. I am in a wager with the world to carry on my affairs at my own expense, if I can. But if I am still to have my allowance of £25 a quarter, and you would not mind giving me the arrears of two quarters due, £50, I own I should take that gladly, and should not feel as if I had lost my wager.

I am ill to-day, having both over-worked and over-walked yesterday. The people for miles around know me and my gaiters and my cane, by now. “ Vous rentrez au Monastier ” they cry as I go past. The engineer is a very nice fellow, so my meals go well, and I take a walk with him in the evening before going to bed. The pension is 3½ francs, say three shillings a day ; and the food capital,

really good and plenteous, and the wine much stronger and pleasanter than most ordinaires. Besides which, there is some Saint Joseph, of which I sometimes treat myself to a bottle, which is gaudy fine stuff. I like the country better almost every day, and get on with my sketching better than I could have expected.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The first notion of the scheme for *Travels with a Donkey* occurs here.

*Le Monastier, Sunday, September 8, 1878*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Rec'd *Scots Worthies*, without notes. However, it is a rotten book, and not worth a rush at best. I sketch, I shoot with a revolver, I work, I take long walks ; generally, I have a good time ; above all, I am happy to meet none but strangers ; this pleases me greatly. In a little while, I shall buy a donkey and set forth upon my travels to the south ; another book ought to come of it. In the meantime, I have scarce enough energy, and still too much work on hand. I must have a clean bill before I start. Tell me about Buxton, and who my father finds to flirt with. I cannot exactly say I wish I were with you, for indeed I am better here by myself ; but I wish I wished so.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*September, 1878. Chez Morel, Le Monastier, Haute Loire*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I suppose you are now at Buxton, but as you have not sent me your address, I cannot address except to Swanston. I am much better, and in good spirits. The country is beautiful, rather too like the High-



lands, but not so grand. The valley of the Gazeille below the village is my favourite spot ; a winding dell of cliffs and firwoods with here and there green meadows. The Mézenc, highest point of central France, is only a few miles from here. My company consists of one fellow of the *Ponts et Chaussées*, two excise officers, and a *précepteur de contributions directes*. There are sometimes horrid scenes at table. The Engineer is the best.

There is news !

Ever your afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

This letter tells of the progress of the *Portfolio* papers called *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* ; and of preparations for the walking tour narrated in *Travels with a Donkey*. Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, editor of the *Portfolio* and author of *A Painter's Camp in the Highlands* and of many well-known works on art, landscape, and French social life, was at this time and for many years living at a small château near Autun ; and the visit here proposed was actually paid and gave great pleasure alike to host and guest (see *P. G. Hamerton, an Autobiography*, etc., p. 451).

*Le Monastier, September, 1878*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You must not expect to hear much from me for the next two weeks ; for I am near starting. Donkey purchased—a love—price, 65 francs and a glass of brandy. My route is all pretty well laid out ; I shall go near no town till I get to Alais. Remember, Poste Restante, Alais, Gard. *Greyfriars* will be in October. You did not say whether you liked *September* ; you might tell me that at Alais. The other No.'s of *Edinburgh* are : *Parliament Close*, *Villa Quarters* (which perhaps may not appear), *Calton Hill*, *Winter and New Year*, and *To the Pentland Hills*. 'Tis a kind of book nobody would ever care to read ; but none of the young men could have done it better than I have, which is always a consolation. I read *Le and Voyage* the other day : what rubbish these reviewers did talk ! It is not badly written, thin, mildly



cheery, and strained. *Selon moi*. I mean to visit Hamerton on my return journey ; otherwise, I should come by sea from Marseilles. I am very well known here now : indeed, quite a feature of the place.—Your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

The Engineer is the Conductor of Roads and Bridges ; then I have the Receiver of Registrations, the First Clerk of Excise, and the Perceiver of the Impost. That is our dinner party. I am a sort of hovering government official, as you see. But away—away from these great companions !

### TO W. E. HENLEY

[*Le Monastier, September, 1878*]

DEAR HENLEY,—I hope to leave Monastier this day (Saturday) week ; thenceforward Poste Restante, Alais, Gard, is my address. *Travels with a Donkey in the French Highlands*. I am no good to-day. I cannot work, nor even write letters. A colossal breakfast yesterday at Puy has, I think, done for me for ever ; I certainly ate more than ever I ate before in my life—a big slice of melon, some ham and jelly, a *filet*, a helping of gudgeons, the breast and leg of a partridge, some green peas, eight crayfish, some Mont d'Or cheese, a peach, and a handful of biscuits, macaroons, and things. It sounds Gargantuan ; it cost three francs a head. So that it was inexpensive to the pocket, although I fear it may prove extravagant to the fleshly tabernacle. I can't think how I did it or why. It is a new form of excess for me ; but I think it pays less than any of them.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

*Le Monastier, at Morel's [September, 1878]*

Lud knows about date, *vide* postmark

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Yours (with enclosures) of the 16th to hand. All work done. I go to Le Puy to-morrow to

dispatch baggage, get cash, stand lunch to engineer, who has been very jolly and useful to me, and hope by five o'clock on Saturday morning to be driving Modestine towards the Gévaudan. Modestine is my ânesse ; a darling, mouse-colour, about the size of a Newfoundland dog (bigger, between you and me), the colour of a mouse, costing 65 francs and a glass of brandy. Glad you sent on all the coin ; was half afraid I might come to a stick in the mountains, donkey and all, which would have been the devil. Have finished *Arabian Nights* and Edinburgh book, and am a free man. Next address, Poste Restante, Alais, Gard. Give my servilities to the family. Health bad ; spirits, I think, looking up.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Chez Morel,  
Le Monastier, Haute Loire, 1878*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Perhaps you do not consider that I am one of the most weary people in the world, longing for a few days holiday more than I can tell, and with two mill-stones round his neck : a book which must be ready by the beginning of October, and which he still hopes to do well ; and a weekly drain which he is now too tired to do well, but which he must carry to an end in spite of fate and fortune, for coin and for honour. You see my work is not altogether of that smiling, cheerful, picnicking sort you seem to fancy. I daresay, my letters are unpleasant enough for you ; but try to keep the balance equal.

To-day I have had (*had*, mark you) in consequence of a holiday yesterday to go with the engineer up to the borders of the Vivarais, to walk from a quarter past seven till I was dead beat at eleven, from three to five, and again from nine till half past eleven, where I am now writing to you. I think that of itself pretty tidy ; I have plenty other letters waiting, you may be sure.

Alas ! I have the insurance claims in my pocket. It is



not my fault ; I had never a moment in London, except the last 2 hours, and then I sat in a station refreshment room, and wished nothing so little as to budge. Dick had better send me something to sign to Poste Restante, Alais, Gard, where I shall arrive from my tour. For I am glad to say, the work is getting through, and I begin to see my holiday under my feet. By the end of next week at latest, I fancy I shall be gone from here, and be a free person for a fortnight.

Yesterday, when I started after breakfast, I was stopped by some of my lacemaking friends. "*Quoi, vous n'êtes pas fatigué, M. Steams ?*" and they knew all about where I had been in the morning. (I should tell you, all the women sit in the street in the shadow, making lace from morning till night.) You see Steams follows me ; the additional S is a refinement hereaway ; but it is obviously something not unlike that, that must represent our name to a French ear. At table and generally in Marcel's, they have given up the attempt and call me M. Louis, which somehow sounds homelike and friendly.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. STEAMS.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Paris, October, 1878

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have seen Hamerton ; he was very kind, all his family seemed pleased to see *An Inland Voyage*, and the book seemed to be quite a household word with them. P. G. himself promised to help me in my bargains with publishers, which, said he, and I doubt not very truthfully, he could manage to much greater advantage than I. He is also to read *An Inland Voyage* over again, and send me his cuts and cuffs in private, after having liberally administered his kisses *coram publico*. I liked him very much. Of all the pleasant parts of my profession, I think the spirit of other men of letters makes the pleasantest.

Do you know, your sunset was very good ? The



“ attack ” (to speak learnedly) was so plucky and odd. I have thought of it repeatedly since. I have just made a delightful dinner by myself in the Café Félix, where I am an old established beggar, and am just smoking a cigar over my coffee. I came last night from Autun, and I am muddled about my plans. The world is such a dance !—  
Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson, hard at work upon *Providence and the Guitar*, *New Arabian Nights*, and *Travels with a Donkey*, was at this time occupying for a few days my rooms at Trinity in my absence. The college buildings and gardens, the ideal setting and careful tutelage of English academic life—in these respects so strongly contrasted with the Scotch—affected him always with a sense of unreality. The gyp mentioned was afterwards head porter of the college.

[Trinity College, Cambridge, Autumn, 1878]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Here I am living like a fighting-cock, and have not spoken to a real person for about sixty hours. Those who wait on me are not real. The man I know to be a myth, because I have seen him acting so often in the Palais Royal. He plays the Duke in *Tricoche et Cacolet* ; I knew his nose at once. The part he plays here is very dull for him, but conscientious. As for the bed-maker, she's a dream, a kind of cheerful, innocent nightmare ; I never saw so poor an imitation of humanity. I cannot work—*cannot*. Even the *Guitar* is still undone ; I can only write ditch-water. 'Tis ghastly ; but I am quite cheerful, and that is more important. Do you think you could prepare the printers for a possible breakdown this week ? I shall try all I know on Monday ; but if I can get nothing better than I got this morning, I prefer to drop a week. Telegraph to me if you think it necessary. I shall not leave till Wednesday at soonest. Shall write again.

R. L. S.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

The Bowles herein mentioned was Thomas Gibson Bowles, editor of *Vanity Fair*; the book of which he had expressed his dislike was *An Inland Voyage*. The Runciman and Godkin allusions I cannot explain: the Cream Tarts story was one of the *New Arabian Nights*, which ran in London from June to October, 1878.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [Autumn, 1878]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Bosh about Bowles. He doesn't like the book and he says so, not unkindly. I shall telegraph to Runciman, asking him not to play the fool. My friends are only too kind; they cannot recognise a decent enemy. No one shall lay a profane finger on the Godkin or Godlet! Don't make me a Godkin. I'm only the author of the Modern Arabian Nights.

As to these, please yourself as to the name. (Only spell it rightly please: Robert LOUIS; mind, not Lewis.) If there is a great deal too much in last instalment, we shall have to make three bites of the Cream Tarts; for I have nearly as much again, *if not more*, in spite of all squeezing. You can send me a proof, can you? that would let me know and I could telegraph, where to leave off, even if I had not the time to return the proof corrected. But look here, I must have proofs of all the best: my name's to go to it.

Yours ever,

R. L. S.

ARTHUR PATCHETT MARTIN

Yorick Club

Melbourne

is my Australian, to whom I will write at once.

## TO EDMUND GOSSE

Stevenson and Mr. Gosse had planned a joint book of old murder stories retold, and had been to visit the scene of one famous murder together.

[Edinburgh, April 16, 1879]

Pool of Siloam, by El Dorado  
Delectable Mountains, Arcadia

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Herewith of the dibbs—a homely fiver. How, and why, do you continue to exist? I do so



ill, but for a variety of reasons. First, I wait an angel to come down and trouble the waters ; second, more angels ; third—well, more angels. The waters are sluggish ; the angels—well, the angels won't come, that's about all. But I sit waiting and waiting, and people bring me meals, which help to pass time (I'm sure it's very kind of them), and sometimes I whistle to myself ; and as there's a very pretty echo at my pool of Siloam, the thing's agreeable to hear. The sun continues to rise every day, to my growing wonder. "The moon by night thee shall not smite." And the stars are all doing as well as can be expected. The air of Arcady is very brisk and pure, and we command many enchanting prospects in space and time. I do not yet know much about my situation ; for, to tell the truth, I only came here by the run since I began to write this letter ; I had to go back to date it ; and I am grateful to you for having been the occasion of this little outing. What good travellers we are, if we had only faith ; no man need stay in Edinburgh but by unbelief ; my religious organ has been ailing for a while past, and I have lain a great deal in Edinburgh, a sheer hulk in consequence. But I got out my wings, and have taken a change of air.

I read your book with great interest, and ought long ago to have told you so. An ordinary man would say that he had been waiting till he could pay his debts. . . . The book is good reading. Your personal notes of those you saw struck me as perhaps most sharp and "best held." See as many people as you can, and make a book of them before you die. That will be a living book, upon my word. You have the touch required. I ask you to put hands to it in private already. Think of what Carlyle's caricature of old Coleridge is to us who never saw S. T. C. With that and *Kubla Khan*, we have the man in the fact. Carlyle's picture, of course, is not of the author of *Kubla*, but of the author of that surprising *Friend* which has knocked the breath out of two generations of hopeful youth. Your portraits would be milder, sweeter, more true perhaps, and perhaps not so truth-telling—if you will take my meaning.

I have to thank you for an introduction to that beautiful



—no, that's not the word—that jolly, with an Arcadian jollity—thing of Vogelweide's. Also for your preface. Some day I want to read a whole book in the same picked dialect as that preface. I think it must be one E. W. Gosse who must write it. He has got himself into a fix with me by writing the preface ; I look for a great deal, and will not be easily pleased.

I never thought of it, but my new book, which should soon be out, contains a visit to a murder scene, but not done as we should like to see them, for, of course, I was running another hare.

If you do not answer this in four pages, I shall stop the enclosed fiver at the bank, a step which will lead to your incarceration for life. As my visits to Arcady are somewhat uncertain, you had better address 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, as usual. I shall walk over for the note if I am not yet home.—Believe me, very really yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I charge extra for a flourish when it is successful ; this isn't, so you have it gratis. Is there any news in Babylon the Great ? My fellow-creatures are electing school boards here in the midst of the ages. It is very composed of them. I can't think why they do it. Nor why I have written a real letter. If you write a real letter back, damme, I'll try to *correspond* with you. A thing unknown in this age. It is a consequence of the decay of faith ; we cannot believe that the fellow will be at the pains to read us.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [Spring, 1879]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Though I date from Edinburgh, I am in the country, hard at work on—a work on morals. What next ? you will exclaim. I should not care to prophesy. Perhaps a work on Manners. I expect proofs of the Donkey book daily. The foul publisher has dodged me all round. I am shorn and bleating : a poor, lone, penniless man of

letters. You will be pleased to know that my news keeps better or at least as well as can be expected. But my health ran low ; hence am I here, tinkering myself with solitude, fresh air, tonics of a poisonous description,—and the work on morals.

How about your work ? Is it not out yet ? Has the vile —— deceived another ? Let us two, although we are not Comtists, have a commination day, and comminate publishers to the sound of a religious music. I think I hear the stage directions :—

“ Here shall a fair white publisher’s body be laid upon the altar ”

or :—

“ In choirs and places where they sing, here shall a publisher be shot out of a gun.”

Will you write to me ? It’s business, mind !

Yours very much,

R. L. S.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

This is in reply to some technical criticisms of his correspondent on the poem, *Our Lady of the Snows*, referring to the Trappist monastery in the Cévennes so called, and afterwards published in *Underwoods*.

Edinburgh [April, 1879]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Heavens ! have I done the like ? “ Clarify and strain,” indeed ? “ Make it like Marvell,” no less. I’ll tell you what—you may go to the devil ; that’s what I think. “ Be eloquent ” is another of your pregnant suggestions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for that one. Portrait of a person about to be eloquent at the request of a literary friend. You seem to forget, sir, that rhyme is rhyme, sir, and—go to the devil.

I’ll try to improve it, but I shan’t be able to—O go to the devil.

Seriously you’re a cool hand. And then you have the brass to ask me *why* “ my steps went one by one ” ? Why ? Powers of man ! to rhyme with *sun*, to be sure. Why else



could it be? And you yourself have been a poet! G-r-r-r-r! I'll never be a poet any more. Men are so d—d ungrateful and captious, I declare I could weep.

O Henley, in my hours of ease  
 You may say anything you please,  
 But when I join the Muse's revel,  
 Begad, I wish you at the devil!  
 In vain my verse I plane and bevel,  
 Like Banville's rhyming devotees;  
 In vain by many an artful swivel  
 Lug in my meaning by degrees;  
 I'm sure to hear my Henley cavil;  
 And grovelling prostrate on my knees,  
 Devote his body to the seas,  
 His correspondence to the devil!

Impromptu poem.

I'm going to Shandon Hydropathic *cum parentibus*. Write here. I heard from Lang. Ferrier prayeth to be remembered; he means to write, likes his Tourgenieff greatly. Also likes my *What was on the Slate*, which, under a new title, yet unfound, and with a new and, on the whole, kindly *dénouement*, is going to shoot up and become a star. . . .

I see I must write some more to you about my Monastery. I am a weak brother in verse. You ask me to re-write things that I have already managed just to write with the skin of my teeth. If I don't re-write them, it's because I don't see how to write them better, not because I don't think they should be. But, curiously enough, you condemn two of my favourite passages, one of which is J. W. Ferrier's favourite of the whole. Here I shall think it's you who are wrong. You see, I did not try to make good verse, but to say what I wanted as well as verse would let me. I don't like the rhyme "ear" and "hear." But the couplet, "My undissuaded heart I hear Whisper courage in my ear," is exactly what I want for the thought, and to me seems very energetic as speech, if not as verse. Would "daring" be better than "courage"? *Je me le demande*. No, it would be ambiguous, as though I had used it licentiously for "daringly," and that would cloak the sense.



In short, your suggestions have broken the heart of the scald. He doesn't agree with them all; and those he does agree with, the spirit indeed is willing, but the d—d flesh cannot, cannot, cannot see its way to profit by. I think I'll lay it by for nine years, like Horace. I think the well of Castaly's run out. No more the Muses round my pillow haunt. I am fallen once more to the mere proser. God bless you.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

"The book" in the following is *Travels with a Donkey*.

*Box Hill, Dorking, Surrey [May 12, 1879]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am here alone with Meredith, but Mrs. M. and Mariette arrive to-day at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past one. I shall stay here till Friday. Then go to Cernay-la-Ville, Seine et Oise, to get this thing for Paul put out of hand. July, I propose to be in Swanston.

The book is out. I have given away all my copies and bought £20 worth besides. Shall do no more, thank you. I sent one to Aunt Maggie, as you proposed, and thank you for the suggestion. This ink and pen are too much for a plain man like me; I cannot go on.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

*[June, 1879], Chez Leopold,  
Cernay la Ville, Seine et Oise*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Thanks for the money, and your letter. I am glad you like the book so well; I am once more quite the dyspeptic and must fall back upon a diet. It is annoying when you want to work. The season still keeps wonderfully bad; it is colder, cloudier, showerier than ever I saw it; but indeed this is the month of April

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belated, and we must keep that in mind. I shall be home in the beginning of next month. How I am to make up my arrears of work, I cannot think.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Paris, June 19, 1879*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have filled up the surveyor's game: he will laugh, I think. I got so muddled over it, I could have died. They want next year's income; who knows what it may be? So I broke out all over the margin into explanatory notes and apologetic notes. It must be droll, I think, to others; it was death to me. I shall have to pay, I am afraid.

I am having such up-hill work. I sit and sit, and scribe and scribe, but cannot get my back into it; my long idleness hangs over me like lead; and this business must be done before 28th June. How are you all? Send me reviews, especially bad ones.

Love to all.—O the weather here is atrocious. One day, we are dining in the harbour with linen clothes; the next, cold, wind, rain—like Scotland upon my word; I could fancy myself at Swanston. You are a blooming bad correspondent and already owe me a letter; so, my service to you, ma'am.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO MISS JANE WHYTE BALFOUR

This correspondent, the long-lived spinster among the Balfour sisters (died 1907, aged 91) and well-beloved "auntie" of a numerous clan of nephews and nieces, is the subject of the set of verses, *Auntie's Skirts*, in the *Child's Garden*. She had been reading *Travels with a Donkey* on its publication.

*[Swanston, June, 1879]*

MY DEAR AUNTIE,—If you could only think a little less of me and others, and a great deal more of your delightful



self, you would be as nearly perfect as there is any need to be. I think I have travelled with donkeys all my life ; and the experience of this book could be nothing new to me. But if ever I knew a real donkey, I believe it is yourself. You are so eager to think well of everybody else (except when you are angry on account of some third person) that I do not believe you have ever left yourself time to think properly of yourself. You never understand when other people are unworthy, nor when you yourself are worthy in the highest degree. Oblige us all by having a guid conceit o' yoursel' and despising in the future the whole crowd, including your affectionate nephew,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

15 Savile Row, W. Savile Club, July/79

MY DEAR MOTHER,—After a desperate struggle with the elements of every sort and principally money, I arrived last night in London, the possessor of 4 shillings. You can count on me for Friday next absolutely ; but unless some money is sent I shall probably have died of hunger in the meanwhile. You will laugh when you hear my troubles ; I have lain in pawn and lived on charity most free. I think you are wrong about my work ; I believe there is an element of idleness in my present collapse, which I mean to evince as soon as I arrive. I am astonished at the reviews I have seen ; they are very kind. Have you seen the *Examiner* under date June 28th ?

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

This letter is contemporary with the much-debated *Cornhill* essay *On some Aspects of Burns*, afterwards published in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. "Meredith's story" is probably *The Tragic Comedians*.

Swanston, July 24, 1879

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have greatly enjoyed your article, which seems to me handsome in tone, and written like a



fine old English gentleman. But is there not a hitch in the sentence at foot of page 153? I get lost in it.

Chapters VIII. and IX. of Meredith's story are very good, I think. But who wrote the review of my book? Whoever he was, he cannot write; he is humane, but a duffer; I could weep when I think of him; for surely to be virtuous and incompetent is a hard lot. I should prefer to be a bold pirate, the gay sailor-boy of immorality, or a publisher at once. My mind is extinct; my appetite is expiring; I have fallen altogether into a hollow-eyed, yawning way of life, like the parties in Burne Jones's pictures. . . . Talking of Burns. (Is this not sad, Weg? I use the term of reproach not because I am angry with you this time, but because I am angry with myself and desire to give pain.) Talking, I say, of Robert Burns, the inspired poet is a very gay subject for study. I made a kind of chronological table of his various loves and lusts, and have been comparatively speechless ever since. I am sorry to say it, but there was something in him of the vulgar, bagmanlike, professional seducer. Oblige me by taking down and reading, for the hundredth time I hope, his *Twa Dogs* and his *Address to the Unco Guid*. I am only a Scotchman, after all, you see; and when I have beaten Burns, I am driven at once, by my parental feelings, to console him with a sugar-plum. But hang me if I know anything I like so well as the *Twa Dogs*. Even a common Englishman may have a glimpse, as it were from Pisgah, of its extraordinary merits.

"*English, The* :—a dull people, incapable of comprehending the Scottish tongue. Their history is so intimately connected with that of Scotland, that we must refer our readers to that heading. Their literature is principally the work of venal Scots."—Stevenson's *Handy Cyclopædia*. Glasgow: Blaikie & Bannock.

Remember me in suitable fashion to Mrs. Gosse, the offspring, and the cat.—And believe me ever yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Rembrandt* refers to an article in the *Edinburgh Review*. "Bummkopf" was Stevenson's name for the typical pedant, German or other, who cannot clear his edifice of its scaffolding, nor set forth the results of research without intruding on the reader all its processes, evidences, and supports. *Burns* is his own aforesaid *Cornhill* essay, not the rejected *Encyclopædia* article.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [July 28, 1879]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am just in the middle of your *Rembrandt*. The taste for Bummkopf and his works is agreeably dissembled so far as I have gone ; and the reins have never for an instant been thrown upon the neck of that wooden Pegasus ; he only perks up a learned snout from a footnote in the cellarage of a paragraph ; just, in short, where he ought to be, to inspire confidence in a wicked and adulterous generation. But, mind you, Bummkopf is not human ; he is Dagon the fish god, and down he will come, sprawling on his belly or his behind, with his hands broken from his helpless carcase, and his head rolling off into a corner. Up will rise on the other side, sane, pleasurable, human knowledge : a thing of beauty and a joy, etc.

I'm three parts through *Burns* ; long, dry, unsympathetic, but sound and, I think, in its dry way, interesting. Next I shall finish the story, and then perhaps *Thoreau*. Meredith has been staying with Morley, has been cracking me up, he writes, to that literary Robespierre ; and he (the L. R.) is about, it is believed, to write to me on a literary scheme. Is it Keats, hope you ? My heart leaps at the thought.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## TO EDMUND GOSSE

With reference to the " term of reproach," it must be explained that Mr. Gosse, who now signs with only one initial, used in these days to sign with two, E. W. G. The nickname Weg was fastened on him by Stevenson, partly under a false impression as to the order of these initials, partly in friendly derision of a passing fit of lameness, which called up the memory of Silas Wegg, the



immortal literary gentleman "with a wooden leg" of *Our Mutual Friend*.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [July 29, 1879]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Yours was delicious ; you are a young person of wit ; one of the last of them ; wit being quite out of date, and humour confined to the Scotch Church and the *Spectator* in unconscious survival. You will probably be glad to hear that I am up again in the world ; I have breathed again, and had a frolic on the strength of it. The frolic was yesterday, Sawbath ; the scene, the Royal Hotel, Bathgate ; I went there with a humorous friend to lunch. The maid soon showed herself a lass of character. She was looking out of window. On being asked what she was after, "I'm lookin' for my lad," says she. "Is that him ?" "Weel, I've been lookin' for him a' my life, and I've never seen him yet," was the response. I wrote her some verses in the vernacular ; she read them. "They're no' bad for a beginner," said she. The landlord's daughter, Miss Stewart, was present in oil colour ; so I wrote her a declaration in verse, and sent it by the handmaid. She (Miss S.) was present on the stair to witness our departure, in a warm, suffused condition. Damn it, Gosse, you needn't suppose that you're the only poet in the world.

Your statement about your initials, it will be seen, I pass over in contempt and silence. When once I have made up my mind, let me tell you, sir, there lives no pock-pudding who can change it. Your anger I defy. Your unmanly reference to a well-known statesman I puff from me, sir, like so much vapour. Weg is your name ; Weg. W E G.

My enthusiasm has kind of dropped from me. I envy you your wife, your home, your child—I was going to say your cat. There would be cats in my home too if I could but get it. I may seem to you "the impersonation of life," but my life is the impersonation of waiting, and that's a poor creature. God help us all, and the deil be kind to the hindmost ! Upon my word, we are a brave, cheery crew, we human beings, and my admiration increases daily—primarily for myself, but by a roundabout process for the whole crowd ; for I daresay they have all their poor little



secrets and anxieties. And here am I, for instance, writing to you as if you were in the seventh heaven, and yet I know you are in a sad anxiety yourself. I hope earnestly it will soon be over, and a fine pink Gosse sprawling in a tub, and a mother in the best of health and spirits, glad and tired, and with another interest in life. Man, you are out of the trouble when this is through. A first child is a rival, but a second is only a rival to the first ; and the husband stands his ground and may keep married all his life—a consummation heartily to be desired. Good-bye, Gosse. Write me a witty letter with good news of the mistress.

R. L. S.

V

THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

S.S. *DEVONIA*—MONTEREY AND SAN FRANCISCO—  
MARRIAGE

JULY, 1879—JULY, 1880





## V

### THE AMATEUR EMIGRANT

**I**N France, as has been already indicated, Stevenson had met the American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, who was afterwards to become his wife. Her domestic relations had not been fortunate ; to his chivalrous nature her circumstances appealed no less than her person ; and almost from their first meeting, which befell at Grez, immediately after the canoe voyage of 1876, he conceived for her an attachment which was to transform and determine his life. On her return to America with her children in the autumn of 1878, she determined to seek a divorce from her husband. Hearing of her intention, together with very disquieting news of her health, and hoping that after she had obtained the divorce he might make her his wife, Stevenson suddenly started for California at the beginning of August, 1879.

For what he knew must seem to his friends, and especially to his father, so wild an errand, he would ask for no supplies from home ; but resolved, risking his whole future on the issue, to test during this adventure his power of supporting himself, and eventually others, by his own labours in literature. In order from the outset to save as much as possible, he made the journey in the steerage and the emigrant train. With this prime motive of economy was combined a second—that of learning for himself the pinch of life as it is felt by the unprivileged and the poor (he had long ago disclaimed for himself the character of a “ consistent first-class passenger in life ”)—and also, it should be added, a third, that of turning his experiences to literary account. On board ship he took daily notes with this

intent, and wrote moreover *The Story of a Lie* for an English magazine. Arrived at his destination, he found his health, as was natural, badly shaken by the hardships of the journey ; tried his favourite open-air cure for three weeks at an Angora goat-ranche some twenty miles from Monterey ; and then lived from September to December in that old Californian coast-town itself, under the conditions set forth in the earlier of the following letters, and under a heavy combined strain of personal anxiety and literary effort. From the notes taken on board ship and in the emigrant train he drafted an account of his journey, intending to make a volume matching in form, though in contents much unlike, the earlier *Inland Voyage and Travels with a Donkey*. He wrote also the essays on Thoreau and the Japanese reformer, Yoshida Torajiro, afterwards published in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* ; one of the most vivid of his shorter tales, *the Pavilion on the Links*, hereinafter referred to as a " blood and thunder," as well as a great part of another and longer story drawn from his new experiences and called *A Vendetta in the West* ; but this did not satisfy him, and was never finished. He planned at the same time, in the spirit of romantic comedy, that tale which took final shape four years later as *Prince Otto*. Towards the end of December, 1879, Stevenson moved to San Francisco, where he lived for three months in a workman's lodging, leading a life of frugality amounting, it will be seen, to self-imposed penury, and working always with the same intensity of application, until his health utterly broke down. One of the causes which contributed to his illness was the fatigue he underwent in helping to watch beside the sick-bed of a child, the son of his landlady. During a part of March and April he lay at death's door—his first positively dangerous sickness since childhood—and was slowly tended back to life by the joint ministrations of his future wife and the physician to whom his letter of thanks will be found below. His marriage ensued in May, 1880. Immediately afterwards, to try and consolidate his recovery, he moved to a deserted mining-camp in the Californian coast range, and has

recorded the aspects and humours of his life there with a master's touch in the *Silverado Squatters*.

The news of his dangerous illness and approaching marriage had in the meantime unlocked the parental heart and purse ; supplies were sent ensuring his present comfort, with the promise of their continuance for the future, and of a cordial welcome for the new daughter-in-law in his father's house. The following letters, chosen from among those written during the period in question, depict his way of life, and reflect at once the anxiety of his friends and the strain of the time upon himself.





## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The story mentioned at the beginning of this letter is *The Story of a Lie*.

*On board s.s. Devonian, an hour or two  
out of New York [August, 1879]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have finished my story. The handwriting is not good because of the ship's misconduct : thirty-one pages in ten days at sea is not bad.

I shall write a general procuration about this story on another bit of paper. I am not very well ; bad food, bad air, and hard work have brought me down. But the spirits keep good. The voyage has been most interesting, and will make, if not a series of *Pall Mall* articles, at least the first part of a new book. The last weight on me has been trying to keep notes for this purpose. Indeed, I have worked like a horse, and am now as tired as a donkey. If I should have to push on far by rail, I shall bring nothing but my fine bones to port.

Good-bye to you all. I suppose it is now late afternoon with you and all across the seas. What shall I find over there ? I dare not wonder.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

P.S.—I go on my way to-night, if I can ; if not, to-morrow ; emigrant train ten to fourteen days' journey ; warranted extreme discomfort. The only American institution which has yet won my respect is the rain. One sees it is a new country, they are so free with their water. I have been steadily drenched for twenty-four hours ; waterproof wet through ; immortal spirit fitfully blinking up in spite. Bought a copy of my own work, and the man said "by Stevenson."—"Indeed," says I.—"Yes, sir," says he.—Scene closes.

I am not beaten yet, though disappointed. If I am, it's for good this time ; you know what "for good" means in my vocabulary—something inside of 12 months perhaps ;

but who knows ? At least, if I fail in my great purpose, I shall see some wild life in the West and visit both Florida and Labrador ere I return. But I don't yet know if I have the courage to stick to life without it. Man, I was sick, sick, sick of this last year.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*[In the Emigrant Train from New York to San Francisco, August, 1879]*

DEAR COLVIN,—I am in the cars between Pittsburgh and Chicago, just now bowling through Ohio. I am taking charge of a kid, whose mother is asleep, with one eye, while I write you this with the other. I reached N. Y. Sunday night ; and by five o'clock Monday was under way for the West. It is now about ten on Wednesday morning, so I have already been about forty hours in the cars. It is impossible to lie down in them, which must end by being very wearying.

I had no idea how easy it was to commit suicide. There seems nothing left of me ; I died a while ago ; I do not know who it is that is travelling.

Of where or how, I nothing know ;

And why, I do not care ;

Enough if, even so,

My travelling eyes, my travelling mind can go  
By flood and field and hill, by wood and meadow fair,  
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.

I think, I hope, I dream no more

The dreams of elsewhere,

The cherished thoughts of yore ;

I have been changed from what I was before ;  
And drunk too deep perchance the lotus of the air  
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.

Unweary God me yet shall bring

To lands of brighter air,

Where I, now half a king,

Shall with enfranchised spirit loudlier sing,  
And wear a bolder front than that which now I wear  
Beside the Susquehannah and along the Delaware.



Exit Muse, hurried by child's games. . . .

Have at you again, being now well through Indiana. In America you eat better than anywhere else ; fact. The food is heavenly.

No man is any use until he has dared everything ; I feel just now as if I had, and so might become a man. " If ye have faith like a grain of mustard seed." That is so true ! Just now I have faith as big as a cigar-case ; I will not say die, and do not fear man nor fortune.

R. L. S.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

*Crossing Nebraska [Saturday, August 23, 1879]*

MY DEAR HENLEY,—I am sitting on the top of the cars with a mill party from Missouri going west for his health. Desolate flat prairie upon all hands. Here and there a herd of cattle, a yellow butterfly or two ; a patch of wild sunflowers ; a wooden house or two ; then a wooden church alone in miles of waste ; then a windmill to pump water. When we stop, which we do often, for emigrants and freight travel together, the kine first, the men after, the whole plain is heard singing with cicadæ. This is a pause, as you may see from the writing. What happened to the old pedestrian emigrants, what was the tedium suffered by the Indians and trappers of our youth, the imagination trembles to conceive. This is now Saturday, 23rd, and I have been steadily travelling since I parted from you at St. Pancras. It is a strange vicissitude from the Savile Club to this ; I sleep with a man from Pennsylvania who has been in the States Navy, and mess with him and the Missouri bird already alluded to. We have a tin wash-bowl among four. I wear nothing but a shirt and a pair of trousers, and never button my shirt. When I land for a meal, I pass my coat and feel dressed. This life is to last till Friday, Saturday, or Sunday next. It is a strange affair to be an emigrant, as I hope you shall see in a future work. I wonder if this will be legible ; my present



station on the waggon roof, though airy compared to the cars, is both dirty and insecure. I can see the track straight before and straight behind me to either horizon. Peace of mind I enjoy with extreme serenity ; I am doing right ; I know no one will think so ; and don't care. My body, however, is all to whistles ; I don't eat ; but, man, I can sleep. The car in front of mine is chock full of Chinese.

*Monday.*—What it is to be ill in an emigrant train let those declare who know. I slept none till late in the morning, overcome with laudanum of which I had luckily a little bottle. All to-day I have eaten nothing, and only drunk two cups of tea, for each of which, on the pretext that the one was breakfast and the other dinner, I was charged fifty cents. Our journey is through ghostly deserts, sagebrush and alkali, and rocks without form or colour, a sad corner of the world. I confess I am not jolly, but mighty calm, in my distresses. My illness is a subject of great mirth to some of my fellow-travellers, and I smile rather sickly at their jests.

We are going along Bitter Creek just now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest. I hope I may get this posted at Ogden, Utah.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*[Coast Line Mountains, California  
September, 1879]*

HERE is another curious start in my life. I am living at an Angora goat-ranche, in the Coast Line Mountains, eighteen miles from Monterey. I was camping out, but got so sick that the two rancheros took me in and tended me. One is an old bear-hunter, seventy-two years old, and a captain from the Mexican war ; the other a pilgrim, and one who was out with the bear flag and under Fremont when California was taken by the States. They are both true frontiersmen, and most kind and pleasant. Captain

Smith, the bear-hunter, is my physician, and I obey him like an oracle.

The business of my life stands pretty nigh still. I work at my notes of the voyage. It will not be very like a book of mine ; but perhaps none the less successful for that. I will not deny that I feel lonely to-day ; but I do not fear to go on, for I am doing right. I have not yet had a word from England, partly, I suppose, because I have not yet written for my letters to New York ; do not blame me for this neglect ; if you knew all I have been through, you would wonder I had done so much as I have. I teach the ranche children reading in the morning, for the mother is from home sick.—Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[Monterey, California, October, 1879]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I received your letter with delight ; it was the first word that reached me from the old country. I am in good health now ; I have been pretty seedy, for I was exhausted by the journey and anxiety below even my point of keeping up ; I am still a little weak, but that is all ; I begin to ingrease,\* it seems, already. My book is about half drafted : the *Amateur Emigrant*, that is. Can you find a better name ? I believe it will be more popular than any of my others ; the canvas is so much more popular and larger too. Fancy, it is my fourth. That voluminous writer. I was vexed to hear about the last chapter of *The Lie*, and pleased to hear about the rest ; it would have been odd if it had no birthmark, born where and how it was. It should by rights have been called the *Devonia*, for that is the habit with all children born in a steerage.

I write to you, hoping for more. Give me news of all who concern me, near or far, or big or little. Here, sir, in California you have a willing hearer.

\* *Engraisser*, grow fat.



Monterey is a place where there is no summer or winter, and pines and sand and distant hills and a bay all filled with real water from the Pacific. You will perceive that no expense has been spared. I now live with a little French doctor ; I take one of my meals in a little French restaurant ; for the other two, I sponge. The population of Monterey is about that of a dissenting chapel on a wet Sunday in a strong church neighbourhood. They are mostly Mexican and Indian—mixed.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

*Monterey, 8th October, 1879*

MY DEAR WEG,—I know I am a rogue and the son of a dog. Yet let me tell you, when I came here I had a week's misery and a fortnight's illness, and since then I have been more or less busy in being content. This is a kind of excuse for my laziness. I hope you will not excuse yourself. My plans are still very uncertain, and it is not likely that anything will happen before Christmas. In the meanwhile, I believe I shall live on here "between the sandhills and the sea," as I think Mr. Swinburne hath it. I was pretty nearly slain ; my spirit lay down and kicked for three days ; I was up at an Angora goat-ranche in the Santa Lucia Mountains, nursed by an old frontiersman, a mighty hunter of bears, and I scarcely slept, or ate, or thought for four days. Two nights I lay out under a tree in a sort of stupor, doing nothing but fetch water for myself and horse, light a fire and make coffee, and all night awake hearing the goat-bells ringing and the tree-frogs singing when each new noise was enough to set me mad. Then the bear-hunter came round, pronounced me "real sick," and ordered me up to the ranche.

It was an odd, miserable piece of my life ; and according to all rule, it should have been my death ; but after a while my spirit got up again in a divine frenzy, and has since



kicked and spurred my vile body forward with great emphasis and success.

My new book, *The Amateur Emigrant*, is about half drafted. I don't know if it will be good, but I think it ought to sell in spite of the devil and the publishers ; for it tells an odd enough experience, and one, I think, never yet told before. Look for my *Burns* in the *Cornhill*, and for my *Story of a Lie* in Paul's withered babe, the *New Quarterly*. You may have seen the latter ere this reaches you ; tell me if it has any interest, like a good boy, and remember that it was written at sea in great anxiety of mind. What is your news ? Send me your works, like an angel, *au fur et à mesure* of their apparition, for I am naturally short of literature, and I do not wish to rust.

I fear this can hardly be called a letter. To say truth, I feel already a difficulty of approach ; I do not know if I am the same man I was in Europe, perhaps I can hardly claim acquaintance with you. My head went round and looks another way now ; for when I found myself over here in a new land, and all the past uprooted in the one tug, and I neither feeling glad nor sorry, I got my last lesson about mankind ; I mean my latest lesson, for of course I do not know what surprises there are yet in store for me. But that I could have so felt astonished me beyond description. There is a wonderful callousness in human nature which enables us to live. I had no feeling one way or another, from New York to California, until, at Dutch Flat, a mining camp in the Sierra, I heard a cock crowing with a home voice ; and then I fell to hope and regret both in the same moment.

Is there a boy or a girl ? and how is your wife ? I thought of you more than once, to put it mildly.

I live here comfortably enough ; but I shall soon be left all alone, perhaps till Christmas. Then you may hope for correspondence—and may not I ?—Your friend,

R. L. S.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

[Monterey, California, October, 1879]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Herewith the *Pavilion on the Links*, grand carpentry story in nine chapters, and I should hesitate to say how many tableaux. Where is it to go? God knows. It is the dibbs that are wanted. It is not bad, though I say it; carpentry, of course, but not bad at that; and who else can carpenter in England, now that Wilkie Collins is played out? It might be broken for magazine purposes at the end of Chapter IV. I send it to you, as I daresay Payn may help, if all else fails. Dibbs and speed are my mottoes.

Do acknowledge the *Pavilion* by return. I shall be so nervous till I hear, as of course I have no copy except of one or two places where the vein would not run. God prosper it, poor *Pavilion*! May it bring me money for myself and my sick one, who may need it, I do not know how soon.

Love to your wife, Anthony, and all. I shall write to Colvin to-day or to-morrow.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

The story spoken of in these letters as *A Vendetta in the West* was three parts written and then given up and destroyed.

[Monterey, California, October, 1879]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Many thanks for your good letter, which is the best way to forgive you for your previous silence. I hope Colvin or somebody has sent me the *Cornhill* and the *New Quarterly*, though I am trying to get them in San Francisco. I think you might have sent me (1) some of your articles in the *P.M.G.\**; (2) a paper with the announcement of second edition; and (3) the announcement of the essays in *Athenæum*. This is to prick you in the

\* *Pall Mall Gazette*.



future. Again, choose, in your head, the best volume of Labiche there is, and post it to Jules Simoneau, Monterey, Monterey Co., California: do this at once, as he is my restaurant man, a most pleasant old boy with whom I discuss the universe and play chess daily. He has been out of France for thirty-five years, and never heard of Labiche. I have eighty-three pages written of a story called *A Vendetta in the West*, and about sixty pages of the first draft of the *Amateur Emigrant*. They should each cover from 130 to 150 pages when done. That is all my literary news. Do keep me posted, won't you? Your letter and Bob's made the fifth and sixth I have had from Europe in three months.

At times I get terribly frightened about my work, which seems to advance too slowly. I hope soon to have a greater burthen to support, and must make money a great deal quicker than I used. I may get nothing for the *Vendetta*; I may only get some forty for the *Emigrant*; I cannot hope to have them both done much before the end of November.

O, and look here, why did you not send me the *Spectator* which slanged me? Rogues and rascals, is that all you are worth?

Yesterday I set fire to the forest, for which, had I been caught, I should have been hung out of hand to the nearest tree, Judge Lynch being an active person hereaway. You should have seen my retreat (which was entirely for strategical purposes). I ran like hell. It was a fine sight. At night I went out again to see it; it was a good fire, though I say it that should not. I had a near escape for my life with a revolver: I fired six charges, and the six bullets all remained in the barrel, which was choked from end to end, from muzzle to breech, with solid lead; it took a man three hours to drill them out. Another shot, and I'd have gone to kingdom come.

This is a lovely place, which I am growing to love. The Pacific licks all other oceans out of hand; there is no place but the Pacific Coast to hear eternal roaring surf. When I get to the top of the woods behind Monterey, I can hear



the seas breaking all round over ten or twelve miles of coast from near Carmel on my left, out to Point Pinas in front, and away to the right along the sands of Monterey to Castroville and the mouth of the Salinas. I was wishing yesterday that the world could get—no, what I mean was that you should be kept in suspense like Mahomet's coffin until the world had made half a revolution, then dropped here at the station as though you had stepped from the cars; you would then comfortably enter Walter's waggon (the sun has just gone down, the moon beginning to throw shadows, you hear the surf rolling, and smell the sea and the pines). That shall deposit you at Sanchez's saloon, where we take a drink; you are introduced to Bronson, the local editor ("I have no brain music," he says; "I'm a mechanic, you see," but he's a nice fellow); to Adolpho Sanchez, who is delightful. Meantime I go to the P.O. for my mail; thence we walk up Alvarado Street together, you now floundering in the sand, now merrily stumping on the wooden side-walks; I call at Hadsell's for my paper; at length behold us installed in Simoneau's little whitewashed back-room, round a dirty tablecloth, with François the baker, perhaps an Italian fisherman, perhaps Augustin Dutra, and Simoneau himself. Simoneau, François and I are the three sure cards; the others mere waifs. Then home to my great airy rooms with five windows opening on a balcony; I sleep on the floor in my camp blankets; you instal yourself abed; in the morning coffee with the little doctor and his little wife; we hire a waggon and make a day of it; and by night, I should let you up again into the air, to be returned to Mrs. Henley in the forenoon following. By God, you would enjoy yourself. So should I. I have tales enough to keep you going till five in the morning, and then they would not be at an end. I forget if you asked me any questions, and I sent your letter up to the city to one who will like to read it. I expect other letters now steadily. If I have to wait another two months, I shall begin to be happy. Will you remember me most affectionately to your wife? Shake hands with Anthony from me; and God bless your mother.

God bless Stephen ! Does he not know that I am a man, and cannot live by bread alone, but must have guineas into the bargain. *Burns*, I believe, in my own mind, is one of my high-water marks ; Meiklejohn flames me a letter about it, which is so complimentary that I must keep it or get it published in the *Monterey Californian*. Some of these days I shall send an exemplaire of that paper ; it is huge.—Ever your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The *Vendetta* story herein mentioned never, to my knowledge, got completed.

*Monterey, 21st October [1879]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Although you have absolutely disregarded my plaintive appeals for correspondence, and written only once as against God knows how many notes and notikins of mine—here goes again. I am now all alone in Monterey, a real inhabitant, with a box of my own at the P.O. I have splendid rooms at the doctor's, where I get coffee in the morning (the doctor is French), and I mess with another jolly old Frenchman, the stranded fifty-eight-year-old wreck of a good-hearted, dissipated, and once wealthy Nantais tradesman. My health goes on better ; as for work, the draft of my book was laid aside at p. 68 or so ; and I have now, by way of change, more than seventy pages of a novel, a one-volume novel, alas ! to be called either *A Chapter in the Experience of Arizona Breckonridge* or *A Vendetta in the West*, or a combination of the two. The scene from Chapter IV. to the end lies in Monterey and the adjacent country ; of course, with my usual luck, the plot of the story is somewhat scandalous, containing an illegitimate father for piece of resistance. . . . Ever yours,

R. L. S.



## TO P. G. HAMERTON

The following refers to Mr. Hamerton's candidature, which was not successful, for the Professorship of Fine Art at Edinburgh.

Monterey, California [November, 1879]

MY DEAR MR. HAMERTON,—Your letter to my father was forwarded to me by mistake, and by mistake I opened it. The letter to myself has not yet reached me. This must explain my own and my father's silence. I shall write by this or next post to the only friends I have who, I think, would have an influence, as they are both professors. I regret exceedingly that I am not in Edinburgh, as I could perhaps have done more, and I need not tell you that what I might do for you in the matter of the election is neither from friendship nor gratitude, but because you are the only man (I beg your pardon) worth a damn. I shall write to a third friend, now I think of it, whose father will have great influence.

I find here (of all places in the world) your *Essays on Art*, which I have read with signal interest. I believe I shall dig an essay of my own out of one of them, for it set me thinking; if mine could only produce yet another in reply, we could have the marrow out between us.

I hope, my dear sir, you will not think badly of me for my long silence. My head has scarce been on my shoulders. I had scarce recovered from a long fit of useless ill-health than I was whirled over here double-quick time and by cheapest conveyance.

I have been since pretty ill, but pick up, though still somewhat of a mossy ruin. If you would view my countenance aright, come—view it by the pale moonlight. But that is on the mend. I believe I have now a distant claim to tan.

A letter will be more than welcome in this distant clime, where I have a box at the post-office—generally, I regret to say, empty. Could your recommendation introduce me to an American publisher? My next book I should really try to get hold of here, as its interest is international, and the



more I am in this country the more I understand the weight of your influence. It is pleasant to be thus most at home abroad, above all, when the prophet is still not without honour in his own land. . . .

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

The copy of the Monterey paper here mentioned never came to hand, nor have the contributions of R. L. S. to that journal ever, so far as I know, been traced.

*Monterey, California, 15th November, 1879*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Your letter was to me such a bright spot that I answer it right away to the prejudice of other correspondents or -dants (don't know how to spell it) who have prior claims. . . . It is the history of our kindnesses that alone makes this world tolerable. If it were not for that, for the effect of kind words, kind looks, kind letters, multiplying, spreading, making one happy through another and bringing forth benefits, some thirty, some fifty, some a thousandfold, I should be tempted to think our life a practical jest in the worst possible spirit. So your four pages have confirmed my philosophy as well as consoled my heart in these ill hours.

Yes, you are right ; Monterey is a pleasant place ; but I see I can write no more to-night. I am tired and sad, and being already in bed, have no more to do but turn out the light.—Your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

I try it again by daylight. Once more in bed however ; for to-day it is *mucho frio*, as we Spaniards say ; and I have no other means of keeping warm for my work. I have done a good spell,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  foolscap pages ; at least 8 of *Cornhill* ; ah, if I thought that I could get 8 guineas for it. My trouble is that I am all too ambitious just now. A book whereof 70 out of 120 are scrolled. A novel whereof 85 out of 140 are pretty well nigh done. A short story of 50 pp., which shall be finished to-morrow, or I'll know

the reason why. This may bring in a lot of money : but I dread to think that it is all on three chances. If the three were to fail, I am in a bog. The novel is called *A Vendetta in the West*. I see I am in a grasping, dismal humour, and should, as we Americans put it, quit writing. In truth, I am so haunted by anxieties that one or other is sure to come up in all that I write.

I will send you herewith a Monterey paper where the works of R. L. S. appear, nor only that, but all my life on studying the advertisements will become clear. I lodge with Dr. Heintz ; take my meals with Simoneau ; have been only two days ago shaved by the tonsorial artist Michaels ; drink daily at the Bohemia saloon ; get my daily paper from Hadsell's ; was stood a drink to-day by Albano Rodriguez ; in short, there is scarce a person advertised in that paper but I know him, and I may add scarce a person in Monterey but is there advertised. The paper is the marrow of the place. Its bones—pooh, I am tired of writing so sillily.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[Monterey, December, 1879]

TO-DAY, my dear Colvin, I send you the first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, 71 pp., by far the longest and the best of the whole. It is not a monument of eloquence ; indeed, I have sought to be prosaic in view of the nature of the subject ; but I almost think it is interesting.

Whatever is done about any book publication, two things remember : I must keep a royalty ; and, second, I must have all my books advertised, in the French manner, on the leaf opposite the title. I know from my own experience how much good this does an author with book buyers.

The Entire *A. E.* will be a little longer than the two others, but not very much. Here and there, I fancy, you will laugh as you read it ; but it seems to me rather a clever



book than anything else : the book of a man, that is, who has paid a great deal of attention to contemporary life, and not through the newspapers.

I have never seen my *Burns* ! the darling of my heart ! I await your promised letter. Papers, magazines, articles by friends ; reviews of myself, all would be very welcome. I am reporter for the *Monterey Californian*, at a salary of two dollars a week ! *Comment trouvez-vous ça ?* I am also in a conspiracy with the American editor, a French restaurant-man, and an Italian fisherman against the Padre. The enclosed poster is my last literary appearance. It was put up to the number of 200 exemplaires at the witching hour ; and they were almost all destroyed by eight in the morning. But I think the nickname will stick. *Dos Reales ; deux réaux ;* two bits ; twenty-five cents ; about a shilling ; but in practice it is worth from ninepence to threepence : thus, two glasses of beer would cost two bits. The Italian fisherman, an old Garibaldian, is a splendid fellow.

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

The following is in acknowledgment of Mr. Gosse's volume called *New Poems*.

*Monterey, Dec. 8, 1879*

MY DEAR WEG,—I received your book last night as I lay abed with a pleurisy, the result, I fear, of overwork, gradual decline of appetite, etc. You know what a wooden-hearted curmudgeon I am about contemporary verse. I like none of it, except some of my own. (I look back on that sentence with pleasure ; it comes from an honest heart.) Hence you will be kind enough to take this from me in a kindly spirit ; the piece "To my daughter" is delicious. And yet even here I am going to pick holes. I am a *beastly* curmudgeon. It is the last verse. "Newly budded" is off the venue ; and haven't you gone ahead to make a poetry débâcle instead of sticking to your muttons, and comparing with the mysterious light of stars the plain, friendly,



perspicuous human day? But this is to be a beast. The little poem is eminently pleasant, human, and original.

I have read nearly the whole volume, and shall read it nearly all over again; you have no rivals!

Bancroft's *History of the United States*, even in a centenary edition, is essentially heavy fare; a little goes a long way; I respect Bancroft, but I do not love him; he has moments when he feels himself inspired to open up his improvisations upon universal history and the designs of God; but I flatter myself I am more nearly acquainted with the latter than Mr. Bancroft. A man, in the words of my Plymouth Brother, "who knows the Lord," must needs, from time to time, write less emphatically. It is a fetter dance to the music of minute guns—not at sea, but in a region not a thousand miles from the Sahara. Still, I am half-way through volume three, and shall count myself unworthy of the name of an Englishman if I do not see the back of volume six. The countryman of Livingstone, Burton, Speke, Drake, Cook, etc.!

I have been sweated not only out of my pleuritic fever, but out of all my eating cares, and the better part of my brains (strange coincidence!), by aconite. I have that peculiar and delicious sense of being born again in an expurgated edition which belongs to convalescence. It will not be for long; I hear the breakers roar; I shall be steering head first for another rapid before many days; *nitor aquis*, said a certain Eton boy, translating for his sins a part of the *Inland Voyage* into Latin elegiacs; and from the hour I saw it, or rather a friend of mine, the admirable Jenkin, saw and recognised its absurd appropriateness, I took it for my device in life. I am going for thirty now; and unless I can snatch a little rest before long, I have, I may tell you in confidence, no hope of seeing thirty-one. My health began to break last winter, and has given me but fitful times since then. This pleurisy, though but a slight affair in itself, was a huge disappointment to me, and marked an epoch. To start a pleurisy about nothing, while leading a dull, regular life in a mild climate, was not my habit in past days; and it is six years, all but a few months, since I was obliged to

spend twenty-four hours in bed. I may be wrong, but if the niting is to continue, I believe I must go. It is a pity in one sense, for I believe the class of work I *might* yet give out is better and more real and solid than people fancy. But death is no bad friend ; a few aches and gasps, and we are done ; like the truant child, I am beginning to grow weary and timid in this big jostling city, and could run to my nurse, even although she should have to whip me before putting me to bed.

Will you kiss your little daughter from me, and tell her that her father has written a delightful poem about her ? Remember me, please, to Mrs. Gosse, to Middlemore, to whom some of these days I will write, to —, to —, yes, to —, and to —. I know you will gnash your teeth at some of these ; wicked, grim, catlike old poet. If I were God, I would sort you—as we say in Scotland.—Your sincere friend,

R. L. S.

“ Too young to be our child ” : blooming good.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Monterey [December, 1879]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been down with pleurisy but now convalesce ; it was a slight attack, but I had a hot fever ; pulse 150 ; and the thing reminds me of my weakness. These miseries tell on me cruelly. But things are not so hopeless as they might be so I am far from despair. Besides I think I may say I have some courage for life.

But now look here :

Fables and Tales	
Story of a Lie . . . . .	100 pp. like the Donkey.
Providence and the Guitar . . . . .	52
Will o' the Mill . . . . .	45
A Lodging for the Night . . . . .	40 (about).
Sieur de Malétroit's Door . . . . .	42

say 280 pp. in all.



Here is my scheme. Henley already proposed that Caldecott should illustrate *Will o' the Mill*. The *Guitar* is still more suited to him; he should make delicious things for that. And though the *Lie* is not much in the way for pictures, I should like to see my dear Admiral in the flesh. I love the Admiral; I give my head, that man's alive. As for the other two, they need not be illustrated at all unless he likes.

Is this a dream altogether? I would if necessary ask nothing down for the stories, and only a small royalty but to begin *from the first copy sold*.

I hate myself for being always on business. But I cannot help my fears and anxieties about money; even if all came well, it would be many a long day before we could afford to leave this coast. Is it true that the *Donkey* is in a second edition? That should bring some money, too, ere long, though not much I daresay. You will see the *Guitar* is made for Caldecott; moreover it's a little thing I like. I am no lover of either of the things in *Temple Bar*; but they will make up the volume, and perhaps others may like them better than I do. They say republished stories do not sell. Well, that is why I am in a hurry to get this out. The public must be educated to buy mine or I shall never make a cent. I have heaps of short stories in view. The next volume will probably be called *Stories* or *A Story-Book*, and contain quite a different lot: *The Pavilion on the Links*: *Professor Rensselaer*: *The Dead Man's Letter*: *The Wild Man of the Woods*: *The Devil on Cramond Sands*. They would all be carpentry stories; pretty grim for the most part; but of course that's all in the air as yet.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

Monterey, December 11th. 1879

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Many, many thanks for your long letter. And now to rectifications:—



1. You are wrong about the *Lie*, from choosing a wrong standard. Compare it with my former stories, not with Scott, or Fielding, or Balzac, or Charles Reade, or even Wilkie Collins ; and where will you find anything half or a tenth part as good as the Admiral, or even Dick, or even the Squire, or even Esther ? If you had thought of that, you would have complimented me for advance. But you were not quite sincere with yourself ; you were seeking arguments to make me devote myself to plays, unbeknown, of course, to yourself.

2. Plays, dear boy, are madness for me just now. The best play is hopeless before six months, and more likely eighteen for outsiders like you and me. And understand me, I have to get money *soon*, or it has no further interest for me ; I am nearly through my capital ; with what pluck I can muster against great anxieties and in a very shattered state of health, I am trying to do things that will bring in money soon ; and I could not, if I were not mad, step out of my way to work at what might perhaps bring me in more but months ahead. Journalism, you know well, is not my forte ; yet if I could only get a roving commission from a paper, I should leap at it and send them goodish (no more than that) goodish stuff.

As for my poor literature, dear Henley, you must expect for a time to find it worse and worse. Perhaps, if God favours me a little at last, it will pick up again. Now I am fighting with both hands, a hard battle, and my work, while it will be as good as I can make it, will probably be worth twopence. If you despised the *Donkey*, dear boy, you should have told me so at the time, not reserved it for a sudden revelation just now when I am down in health, wealth, and fortune. But I am glad you have said so at last. Never, please, delay such confidences any more. If they come quickly, they are a help ; if they come after long silence, they feel almost like a taunt.

Now, to read all this, any one would think you had written unkindly, which is not so, as God who made us knows. But I wished to put myself right ere I went on to state myself. Nothing has come but the volume of Labiche ;

the *Burns* I have now given up ; the P.O. authorities plainly regard it as contraband ; make no further efforts in that direction. But, please, if anything else of mine appears, *see that my people have a copy*. I hoped and supposed my own copy would go as usual to the old address, and, let me use Scotch, I was fair affrontit when I found this had not been done.

You have not told me how you are and I heard you had not been well. Please remedy this.

The end of life ? Yes, Henley, I can tell you what that is. How old are all truths, and yet how far from commonplace ; old, strange, and inexplicable, like the Sphinx. So I learn day by day the value and high doctrinality of suffering. Let me suffer always ; not more than I am able to bear, for that makes a man mad, as hunger drives the wolf to sally from the forest ; but still to suffer some, and never to sink up to my eyes in comfort and grow dead in virtues and respectability. I am a bad man by nature, I suppose ; but I cannot be good without suffering a little. And the end of life, you will ask ? The pleasurable death of self : a thing not to be attained, because it is a thing belonging to Heaven. All this apropos of that good, weak, feverish, fine spirit, — — —. We have traits in common ; we have almost the same strength and weakness intermingled ; and if I had not come through a very hot crucible, I should be just as feverish. My sufferings have been healthier than his ; mine have been always a choice, where a man could be manly : his have been so too, if he knew it, but were not so upon the face ; hence a morbid strain, which his wounded vanity has helped to embitter.

I wonder why I scratch every one to-day. And I believe it is because I am conscious of so much truth in your strictures on my damned stuff. I don't care ; there is something in me worth saying, though I can't find what it is just yet ; and ere I die, if I do not die too fast, I shall write something worth the boards, which with scarce an exception I have not yet done. At the same time, dear boy, in a matter of vastly more importance than Opera Omnia Ludovici Stevenson, I mean my life, I have not been



a perfect cad ; God help me to be less and less so as the days go on.

The *Emigrant* is not good, and will never do for *P.M.G.*, though it must have a kind of rude interest.

R. L. S.

I am not quite an American—yellow envelopes.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

608 Bush Street, San Francisco  
[December 26, 1879]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am now writing to you in a café waiting for some music to begin. For four days I have spoken to no one but to my landlady or landlord or to restaurant waiters. This is not a gay way to pass Christmas, is it ? and I must own the guts are a little knocked out of me. If I could work, I could worry through better. But I have no style at command for the moment, with the second part of the *Emigrant*, the last of the novel, the essay on Thoreau, and God knows all, waiting for me. But I trust something can be done with the first part, or, by God, I'll starve here. . . .\*

O Colvin, you don't know how much good I have done myself. I feared to think this out by myself. I have made a base use of you, and it comes out so much better than I had dreamed of. But I have to stick to work now ; and here's December gone pretty near useless. But, Lord love you, October and November saw a great harvest. It might have affected the price of paper on the Pacific Coast. As for ink, they haven't any, not what I call ink ; only stuff to write cookery-books with, or the works of Hayley, or the pallid perambulations of the—I can find nobody to beat Hayley. I like good, knock-me-down black-strap to write with ; that makes a mark and done with. —By the way, I have tried to read the *Spectator*,†

\* Here follows a long calculation of ways and means.

† Addison's.



which they all say I imitate, and—it's very wrong of me, I know—but I can't. It's all very fine, you know, and all that, but it's vapid. They have just played the overture to *Norma*, and I know it's a good one, for I bitterly wanted the opera to go on ; I had just got thoroughly interested—and then no curtain to rise.

I have written myself into a kind of spirits, bless your dear heart, by your leave. But this is wild work for me, nearly nine and me not back ! What will Mrs. Carson think of me ! Quite a night-hawk, I do declare. You are the worst correspondent in the world—no, not that, Henley is that—well, I don't know, I leave the pair of you to him that made you—surely with small attention. But here's my service, and I'll away home to my den O ! much the better for this crack, Professor Colvin.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

608 Bush Street, San Francisco  
[January 10, 1880]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is a circular letter to tell my estate fully. You have no right to it, being the worst of correspondents ; but I wish to efface the impression of my last, so to you it goes.

Any time between eight and half-past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving No. 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S. ; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on a branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House, no less ; I believe he would be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table covered with waxcloth, and a pampered menial, of High-Dutch extraction and, indeed, as yet only partially extracted, lays before him a cup of coffee, a roll and

a pat of butter, all, to quote the deity, very good. A while ago and R. L. S. used to find the supply of butter insufficient ; but he has now learned the art to exactitude, and butter and roll expire at the same moment. For this refection he pays ten cents, or five pence sterling (£0, os. 5d.).

Half an hour later, the inhabitants of Bush Street observe the same slender gentleman armed, like George Washington, with his little hatchet, splitting kindling, and breaking coal for his fire. He does this quasi-publicly upon the window-sill ; but this is not to be attributed to any love of notoriety, though he is indeed vain of his prowess with the hatchet (which he persists in calling an axe), and daily surprised at the perpetuation of his fingers. The reason is this : that the sill is a strong, supporting beam, and that blows of the same emphasis in other parts of his room might knock the entire shanty into hell. Thenceforth, for from three to four hours, he is engaged darkly with an ink bottle. Yet he is not blacking his boots, for the only pair that he possesses are innocent of lustre and wear the natural hue of the material turned up with caked and venerable slush. The youngest child of his landlady remarks several times a day, as this strange occupant enters or quits the house, " Dere's de author." Can it be that this bright-haired innocent has found the true clue to the mystery ? The being in question is, at least, poor enough to belong to that honourable craft.

His next appearance is at the restaurant of one Donadieu, in Bush Street, between Dupont and Kearney, where a copious meal, half a bottle of wine, coffee and brandy may be procured for the sum of four bits, *alias* fifty cents, £0, 2s. 2d. sterling. The wine is put down in a whole bottleful, and it is strange and painful to observe the greed with which the gentleman in question seeks to secure the last drop of his allotted half, and the scrupulousness with which he seeks to avoid taking the first drop of the other. This is partly explained by the fact that if he were to go over the mark—bang would go a tenpence. He is again armed with a book, but his best friends will learn with pain that he seems at this hour to have deserted the more



serious studies of the morning. When last observed, he was studying with apparent zest the exploits of one Rocambole by the late Viscomte Ponson du Terrail. This work, originally of prodigious dimensions, he had cut into liths or thicknesses apparently for convenience of carriage.

Then the being walks, where is not certain. But by about half-past four, a light beams from the windows of 608 Bush, and he may be observed sometimes engaged in correspondence, sometimes once again plunged in the mysterious rites of the forenoon. About six he returns to the Branch Original, where he once more imbrues himself to the worth of fivepence in coffee and roll. The evening is devoted to writing and reading, and by eleven or half-past darkness closes over this weird and truculent existence.

As for coin, you see I don't spend much, only you and Henley both seem to think my work rather bosh nowadays, and I do want to make as much as I was making, that is £200; if I can do that, I can swim: last year with my ill health I touched only £109; that would not do, I could not fight through on that; but on £200, as I say, I am good for the world, and can even in this quiet way save a little, and that I must do. The worst is my health; it is suspected I had an ague chill yesterday; I shall know by to-morrow, and you know if I am to be laid down with ague the game is pretty well lost. But I don't know; I managed to write a good deal down in Monterey, when I was pretty sickly most of the time, and, by God, I'll try, ague and all. I have to ask you frankly, when you write, to give me any good news you can, and chat a little, but *just in the meantime*, give me no bad. If I could get *Thoreau*, *Emigrant* and *Vendetta* all finished and out of my hand, I should feel like a man who had made half a year's income in a half year; but until the two last are *finished*, you see, they don't fairly count.

I am afraid I bore you sadly with this perpetual talk about my affairs; I will try and stow it; but you see, it touches me nearly. I'm the miser in earnest now: last night, when I felt so ill, the supposed ague chill, it seemed strange not to be able to afford a drink. I would have



walked half a mile, tired as I felt, for a brandy and soda.—  
Ever yours,

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

608 Bush Street  
San Francisco, January, 1880

MY DEAR HENLEY,—You have got a letter ahead of me, owing to the Alpine accumulation of ill news I had to stagger under. I will stand no complaints of my correspondence from England, I having written near half as many letters again as I have received.

Do not damp me about my work; *qu'elle soit bonne ou mauvaise*, it has to be done. You know the wolf is at the door, and I have been seriously ill. I am now at *Thoreau*. I almost blame myself for persevering in anything so difficult under the circumstances: but it may set me up again in style, which is the great point. I have now £80 in the world and two houses to keep up for an indefinite period. It is odd to be on so strict a regimen; it is a week for instance since I have bought myself a drink, and unless times change, I do not suppose I shall ever buy myself another. The health improves. The *Pied Piper* is an idea; it shall have my thoughts, and so shall you. The character of the P. P. would be highly comic, I seem to see. Had you looked at the *Pavilion*, I do not think you would have sent it to Stephen; 'tis a mere story, and has no higher pretension: Dibbs is its name, I wish it was its nature also. The *Vendetta*, at which you ignorantly puff out your lips, is a real novel, though not a good one. As soon as I have found strength to finish the *Emigrant*, I shall also finish the *Vend.* and draw a breath—I wish I could say, “and draw a cheque.” My spirits have risen *contra fortunam*; I will fight this out, and conquer. You are all anxious to have me home in a hurry. There are two or three objections to that; but I shall instruct you more at large when I have time, for to-day I am hunted, having a pile of letters before

me. Yet it is already drawing into dusk.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

The Dook de Karneel (=Cornhill), and Marky de Stephen is of course Mr. Leslie Stephen. The "blood and thunder" is *The Pavilion on the Links*. *Hester Noble* and *Don Juan* were the titles of two plays planned and begun with W. E. Henley the previous winter. They were never finished. The French novels mentioned are by Joseph Méry. The *Dialogue on Character and Destiny* still exists in a fragmentary condition. George the Pie-man is a character in *Deacon Brodie*.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco  
January 23rd, 1880

MY DEAR HENLEY,—That was good news. The Dook de Karneel, K.C.B., taken a blood and thunder! Well, I *thought* it had points; now, I know it. And I'm to see a proof once more! O Glory Hallelujah, how beautiful is proof. And how distressed that author man who dwells too far aloof. His favourite words he always finds his friends misunderstand. With oaths, he reads his articles, moist brow and clenched hand. Impromptoo. The last line first-rate. When may I hope to see the *Deacon*? I pine for the *Deacon*, for proofs of the *Pavilion*—O and for a categorical confession from you that the second edition of the *Donkey* was a false alarm, which I conclude from hearing no more.

I have twice written to the Marky de Stephen; each time with one of my bright papers, so I should hear from him soon. How are Baron Payn, Sir Robert de Bob, and other members of the Aristocracy?

Here's breid an' wine an' kebbuck an' canty cracks at e'en  
To the folks that mind o' me when I'm awa',  
But them that hae forgot me, O ne'er to be forgi'en—  
They may a' gae tapsalteerie in a raw!

I have mighty little to say, dear boy, to seem worth 2½d. I have thought of the Piper, but he does not seem to come



as yet ; I get him too metaphysical. I shall make a shot for *Hester*, as soon as I have finished the *Emigrant* and the *Vendetta* and perhaps my *Dialogue on Character and Destiny*. *Hester* and *Don Juan* are the two that smile on me ; but I will touch nothing in the shape of a play until I have made my year's income sure. You understand, and you see that I am right ?

I have read *M. Auguste* and the *Crime inconnu*, being now abonné to a library, and found them very readable, highly ingenious, and so French that I could not keep my gravity. The *Damned Ones of the Indies* now occupy my attention ; I have myself already damned them repeatedly. I am, as you know, the original person the wheels of whose chariot tarried ; but though I am so slow, I am rootedly tenacious. Do not despair. *Hester* and the *Don* are sworn in my soul ; and they shall be.

Is there no *news* ? Real news, newsy news. Heavenly blue, this is strange. Remember me to the lady of the Cawstle, my toolip, and ever was,

GEORGE THE PIEMAN.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

With reference to the following, it must be explained that the first draft of the first part of the *Amateur Emigrant*, when it reached me about Christmas, had seemed to me, compared to his previous travel papers, a somewhat wordy and spiritless record of squalid experiences, little likely to advance his still only half-established reputation ; and I had written to him to that effect, inopportunately enough, with a fuller measure even than usual of the frankness which always marked our intercourse.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco,  
California [January, 1880]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I received this morning your long letter from Paris. Well, God's will be done ; if it's dull, it's dull ; it was a fair fight, and it's lost, and there's an end. But, fortunately, dulness is not a fault the public hates ; perhaps they may like this vein of dulness. If they don't, damn them, we'll try them with another. I sat down on



the back of your letter, and wrote twelve *Cornhill* pages this day as ever was of that same despised *Emigrant* ; so you see my moral courage has not gone down with my intellect. Only, frankly, Colvin, do you think it a good plan to be so eminently descriptive, and even eloquent in dispraise ? You rolled such a lot of polysyllables over me that a better man than I might have been disheartened.—However, I was not, as you see, and am not. The *Emigrant* shall be finished and leave in the course of next week. And then, I'll stick to stories. I am not frightened. I know my mind is changing ; I have been telling you so for long ; and I suppose I am fumbling for the new vein. Well, I'll find it.

The *Vendetta* you will not much like, I daresay : and that must be finished next ; but I'll knock you with *The Forest State : A Romance*.

I'm vexed about my letters ; I know it is painful to get these unsatisfactory things ; but at least I have written often enough. And not one soul ever gives me any *news*, about people or things ; everybody writes me sermons ; it's good for me, but hardly the food necessary for a man who lives all alone on forty-five cents a day, and sometimes less, with quantities of hard work and many heavy thoughts. If one of you could write me a letter with a jest in it, a letter like what is written to real people in this world—I am still flesh and blood—I should enjoy it. Simpson did, the other day, and it did me as much good as a bottle of wine. A lonely man gets to feel like a pariah after a while—or no, not that, but like a saint and martyr, or a kind of macerated clergyman with pebbles in his boots, a pillared Simeon, I'm damned if I know what, but, man alive, I want gossip.

My health is better, my spirits steadier, I am not the least cast down. If the *Emigrant* was a failure, the *Pavilion*, by your leave, was not : it was a story quite adequately and rightly done, I contend ; and when I find Stephen, for whom certainly I did not mean it, taking it in, I am better pleased with it than before. I know I shall do better work than ever I have done before ; but, mind you, it will not be like it. My sympathies and interests are changed.

There shall be no more books of travel for me. I care for nothing but the moral and the dramatic, not a jot for the picturesque or the beautiful, other than about people. It bored me hellishly to write the *Emigrant*; well, it's going to bore others to read it; that's only fair.

I should also write to others; but indeed I am jack-tired, and must go to bed to a French novel to compose myself for slumber.—Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

608 Bush Street, San Francisco,  
California, Jan. 23, 1880

MY DEAR AND KIND WEG,—It was a lesson in philosophy that would have moved a bear, to receive your letter in my present temper. For I am now well and well at my ease, both by comparison. First, my health has turned a corner; it was not consumption this time, though consumption it has to be some time, as all my kind friends sing to me, day in, day out. Consumption! how I hate that word; yet it can sound innocent, as, *e.g.* consumption of military stores. What was wrong with me, apart from colds and little pleuritic flea-bites, was a lingering malaria; and that is now greatly overcome. I eat once more, which is a great amusement and, they say, good for the health. Second, many of the thunderclouds that were overhanging me when last I wrote, have silently stolen away like Longfellow's Arabs: and I am now engaged to be married to the woman whom I have loved for three years and a half. I do not yet know when the marriage can come off; for there are many reasons for delay. But as few people before marriage have known each other so long or made more trials of each other's tenderness and constancy, I permit myself to hope some quiet at the end of all. At least I will boast myself so far; I do not think many wives are better loved than mine will be. Third and last, in the order of what has changed my feelings, my people have



cast me off, and so that thundercloud, as you may almost say, has overblown. You know more than most people whether or not I loved my father.\* These things are sad; nor can any man forgive himself for bringing them about; yet they are easier to meet in fact than by anticipation. I almost trembled whether I was doing right, until I was fairly summoned; then, when I found that I was not shaken one jot, that I could grieve, that I could sharply blame myself, for the past, and yet never hesitate one second as to my conduct in the future, I believed my cause was just and I leave it with the Lord. I certainly look for no reward, nor any abiding city either here or hereafter, but I please myself with hoping that my father will not always think so badly of my conduct nor so very slightly of my affection as he does at present.

You may now understand that the quiet economical citizen of San Francisco who now addresses you, a bon-homme given to cheap living, early to bed though scarce early to rise in proportion (*que diable!* let us have style, anyway), busied with his little bits of books and essays and with a fair hope for the future, is no longer the same desponding, invalid son of a doubt and an apprehension who

\* In reference to the father's estrangement at this time, Sir James Dewar, an old friend of the elder Stevenson, tells a story which would have touched R. L. S. infinitely had he heard it. Sir James (then Professor) Dewar and Mr. Thomas Stevenson were engaged together on some official scientific work near Duns in Berwickshire. "Spending the evening together," writes Sir James, "at an hotel in Berwick-on-Tweed, the two, after a long day's work, fell into close fireside talk over their toddy, and Mr. Stevenson opened his heart upon what was to him a very sore grievance. He spoke with anger and dismay of his son's journey and intentions, his desertion of the old firm, and taking to the devious and barren paths of literature. The Professor took up the cudgels in the son's defence, and at last, by way of ending the argument, half jocularly offered to wager that in ten years from that moment R. L. S. would be earning a bigger income than the old firm had ever commanded. To his surprise, the father became furious, and repulsed all attempts at reconciliation. But six and a half years later, Mr. Stevenson, broken in health, came to London to seek medical advice, and although so feeble that he had to be lifted out and into his cab, called at the Royal Institute to see the Professor. He said: 'I am here to consult a doctor, but I couldna be in London without coming to shake your hand and confess that you were richt after a' about Louis, and I was wrang.' The frail old frame shook with emotion, and he muttered, 'I ken this is my last visit to the south.' A few weeks later he was dead."



last wrote to you from Monterey. I am none the less warmly obliged to you and Mrs. Gosse for your good words. I suppose that I am the devil (hearing it so often), but I am not ungrateful. Only please, Weg, do not talk of genius about me ; I do not think I want for a certain talent, but I am heartily persuaded I have none of the other commodity ; so let that stick to the wall ; you only shame me by such friendly exaggerations.

When shall I be married ? When shall I be able to return to England ? When shall I join the good and blessed in a forced march upon the New Jerusalem ? That is what I know not in any degree ; some of them, let us hope, will come early, some after a judicious interval. I have three little strangers knocking at the door of Leslie Stephen : *The Pavilion on the Links*, a blood and thunder story, *accepted* ; *Yoshida Torajiro*, a paper on a Japanese hero who will warm your blood, *postulant* ; and *Henry David Thoreau : his character and opinions*—*postulant* also. I give you these hints knowing you to love the best literature, that you may keep an eye at the masthead for these little tit-bits. Write again, and soon, and at greater length to your friend.—Your friend,

(signed) R. L. S.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

608 Bush Street, San Francisco, Jan. 26, '80

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have to drop from a 50 cent to a 25 cent dinner ; to-day begins my fall. That brings down my outlay in food and drink to 45 cents or 1s. 10½d. per day. How are the mighty fallen ! Luckily, this is such a cheap place for food ; I used to pay as much as that for my first breakfast in the Savile in the grand old palmy days of yore. I regret nothing, and do not even dislike these straits, though the flesh will rebel on occasion. It is to-day bitter cold, after weeks of lovely warm weather, and I am all in a chitter. I am about to issue for my little shilling and half-penny meal, taken in the middle of the day, the poor man's

hour ; and I shall eat and drink to your prosperity.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

### TO PROFESSOR MEIKLEJOHN

One day at the Savile Club, Stevenson, hearing a certain laugh, cried out that he must know the laugher, who turned out to be a fellow-countryman, the late John Meiklejohn, the well-known educational authority and professor at St. Andrews University. Stevenson introduced himself, and the two became firm friends. Allusion was made a few pages back to a letter from Professor Meiklejohn about the *Burns* essay.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco  
California, Feb. 1st, 1880

MY DEAR MEIKLEJOHN,—You must think me a thankless fellow by this time ; but if you knew how harassed and how sick I had been, and how I have twice begun to write to you already, you might condescend to forgive the puir gangrel body. To tell you what I have been doing, thinking, and coming through these six or seven months would exhilarate nobody : least of all me. *Infandum jubes*, so I hope you won't. I have done a great deal of work, but perhaps my health of mind and body should not let me expect much from what I have done. At least I have turned the corner ; my feet are on the rock again, I believe, and I shall continue to pour forth pure and wholesome literature for the masses as per invoice.

I am glad you like *Burns* ; I think it is the best thing I ever did. Did not the national vanity exclaim ? Do you know what Shairp thought ? I think I let him down gently, did I not ?

I have done a *Thoreau*, which I hope you may like, though I have a feeling that perhaps it might be better. Please look out for a little paper called *Yoshida Torajiro*, which, I hope, will appear in *Cornhill* ere very long ; the subject, at least, will interest you. I am to appear in the same magazine with a real " blood and bones in the name of God " story. Why Stephen took it, is to me a mystery ;



anyhow, it was fun to write, and if you can interest a person for an hour and a half, you have not been idle. When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge ; I take them like opium ; and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind. And frankly, Meiklejohn, it is not Shakespeare we take to, when we are in a hot corner ; nor, certainly, George Eliot—no, nor even Balzac. It is Charles Reade, or old Dumas, or the Arabian Nights, or the best of Walter Scott ; it is stories we want, not the high poetic function which represents the world ; we are then like the Asiatic with his improvisatore or the middle-aged with his *trouvère*. We want incident, interest, action : to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall peruse your important work ; but what we want now is a drug. So I, when I am ready to go beside myself, stick my head into a story-book, as the ostrich with her bush ; let fate and fortune meantime be-labour my posteriors at their will.

I have not seen the *Spectator* article ; nobody sent it to me. If you had an old copy lying by you, you would be very good to despatch it to me. A little abuse from my grandmamma would do me good in health, if not in morals.

This is merely to shake hands with you and give you the top of the morning in 1880. But I look to be answered ; and then I shall promise to answer in return. For I am now, so far as that can be in this world, my own man again, and when I have heard from you, I shall be able to write more naturally and at length.

At least, my dear Meiklejohn, I hope you will believe in the sincerely warm and friendly regard in which I hold you, and the pleasure with which I look forward, not only to hearing from you shortly, but to seeing you again in the flesh with another good luncheon and good talk. Tell me when you don't like my work.—Your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

The essays here mentioned on Benjamin Franklin and William Penn were projects long cherished but in the end abandoned : *The Forest State* came to maturity three years later as *Prince Otto*.

608 Bush Street, San Francisco  
Cal., February, 1880

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Before my work or anything I sit down to answer your long and kind letter.

I am well, cheerful, busy, hopeful ; I cannot be knocked down ; I do not mind about the *Emigrant*. I never thought it a masterpiece. It was written to sell, and I believe it will sell ; and if it does not, the next will. You need not be uneasy about my work ; I am only beginning to see my true method.

(1) As to Studies. There are two more already gone to Stephen. *Yoshida Torajiro*, which I think temperate and adequate ; and *Thoreau*, which will want a really Balzacian effort over the proofs. But I want *Benjamin Franklin and the Art of Virtue* to follow ; and perhaps also *William Penn*, but this last may be perhaps delayed for another volume—I think not, though. The *Studies* will be an intelligent volume, and in their latter numbers more like what I mean to be my style, or I mean what my style means to be, for I am passive. (2) The Essays. Good news indeed. I think *Ordered South* must be thrown in. It always swells the volume, and it will never find a more appropriate place. It was May, 1874, *Macmillan*, I believe. (3) Plays. I did not understand you meant to try the draft. I shall make you a full scenario as soon as the *Emigrant* is done. (4) *Emigrant*. He shall be sent off next week. (5) Stories. You need not be alarmed that I am going to imitate Meredith. You know I was a storyteller ingrain ; did not that reassure you ? The *Vendetta*, which falls next to be finished, is not entirely pleasant. But it has points. *The Forest State* or *The Greenwood State : A Romance*, is another pair of shoes. It is my old *Semiramis*, our half-seen Duke and Duchess, which suddenly sprang into sunshine clearness as a story the other day.

The kind, happy *dénouement* is unfortunately absolutely undramatic, which will be our only trouble in quarrying out the play. I mean we shall quarry from it. *Characters*—Otto Frederick John, hereditary Prince of Grünewald ; Amelia Seraphina, Princess ; Conrad, Baron Gondremarck, Prime Minister ; Cancellarius Greisengesang ; Killian Gottesacker, Steward of the River Farm ; Ottilie, his daughter ; the Countess von Rosen. Seven in all. A brave story, I swear ; and a brave play too, if we can find the trick to make the end. The play, I fear, will have to end darkly, and that spoils the quality as I now see it of a kind of crockery, eighteenth century, high-life-below-stairs life, breaking up like ice in spring before the nature and the certain modicum of manhood of my poor, clever, feather-headed Prince, whom I love already. I see Seraphina too. Gondremarck is not quite so clear. The Countess von Rosen, I have ; I'll never tell you who she is ; it's a secret ; but I have known the countess ; well, I will tell you ; it's my old Russian friend, Madame Zassetsky. Certain scenes are, in conception, the best I have ever made, except for *Hester Noble*. Those at the end, Von Rosen and the Princess, the Prince and Princess, and the Princess and Gondremarck, as I now see them from here, should be nuts, Henley, nuts. It irks me not to go to them straight. But the *Emigrant* stops the way ; then a reassured scenario for *Hester* ; then the *Vendetta* ; then two (or three) essays—*Benjamin Franklin, Thoughts on Literature as an Art, Dialogue on Character and Destiny between two Puppets, The Human Compromise* ; and then, at length—come to me, my Prince. O Lord, it's going to be courtly ! And there is not an ugly person nor an ugly scene in it. The *Slate* both Fanny and I have damned utterly ; it is too morbid, ugly, and unkind ; better starvation.

#### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I had written proposing that a collected volume of his short stories should be published with illustrations by Caldecott. At



the end of this letter occurs his first allusion to his now famous *Requiem*.

[608 Bush Street,  
San Francisco, February, 1880]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I received a very nice letter from you with two enclosures. I am still unable to finish the *Emigrant*, although there are only some fifteen pages to do. The *Vendetta* is, I am afraid, scarce *Fortnightly* form, though after the *Pavilion* being taken by Stephen, I am truly at sea about all such matters. I daresay my *Prince of Grünewald*—the name still uncertain—would be good enough for anything if I could but get it done: I believe that to be a really good story. The *Vendetta* is somewhat cheap in motive; very rum and unlike the present kind of novels both for good and evil in writing; and on the whole, only remarkable for the heroine's character, and that I believe to be in it.

I am not well at all. But hope to be better. You know I have been hawked to death these last months. And then I lived too low, I fear; any way I have got pretty low and out at elbows in health. I wish I could say better,—but I cannot. With a constitution like mine, you never know—to-morrow I may be carrying topgallant sails again: but just at present I am scraping along with a jurymast and a kind of amateur rudder. Truly I have some misery, as things go; but these things are mere detail. However I do not want to *crever, claquer*, and cave in just when I have a chance of some happiness; nor do I mean to. All the same, I am more and more in a difficulty how to move every day. What a day or an hour might bring forth, God forbid that I should prophesy. Certainly, do what you like about the stories; *Will o' the Mill* or not. It will be Caldecott's book or nobody's. I am glad you liked the *Guitar*: I always did: and I think C. could make lovely pikters to it: it almost seems as if I must have written it for him express.

I have already been a visitor at the Club for a fortnight; but that's over, and I don't much care to renew the period. I want to be married, not to belong to all the Clubs in



Christendie. . . . I half think of writing up the Sand-lot agitation for Morley ; it is a curious business ; were I stronger, I should try to sugar in with some of the leaders : a chield amang 'em takin' notes ; one, who kept a brothel, I reckon, before she started socialist, particularly interests me. If I am right as to her early industry, you know she would be sure to adore me. I have been all my days a dead hand at a harridan, I never saw the one yet that could resist me. When I die of consumption, you can put that upon my tomb.

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Sketch of my tomb follows :—

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

BORN 1850, OF A FAMILY OF ENGINEERS,  
DIED . . . . .

“ NITOR AQUIS.”

HOME IS THE SAILOR, HOME FROM SEA,  
AND THE HUNTER HOME FROM THE HILL.

You, who pass this grave, put aside hatred ; love kindness ; be all services remembered in your heart and all offences pardoned ; and as you go down again among the living, let this be your question : can I make some one happier this day before I lie down to sleep ? Thus the dead man speaks to you from the dust : you will hear no more from him.

---

Who knows, Colvin, but I may thus be of more use when I am buried than ever when I was alive ? The more I think of it, the more earnestly do I desire this. I may perhaps try to write it better some day ; but that is what I want in sense. The verses are from a beayootiful poem by me.

R. L. S.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

608 Bush Street, San Francisco [March, 1880]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—My landlord and landlady's little four-year-old child is dying in the house ; and O, what he has suffered ! It has really affected my health. O never, never, any family for me ! I am cured of that.

I have taken a long holiday—have not worked for three days, and will not for a week ; for I was really weary. Excuse this scratch ; for the child weighs on me, dear Colvin. I did all I could to help ; but all seems little, to the point of crime, when one of these poor innocents lies in such misery.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

## TO J. W. FERRIER

In the interval between this letter and the last, the writer had been down with an acute and dangerous illness. *Forester*, here mentioned, was an autobiographical paper by J. W. F. on his own boyhood.

P.O. San Francisco, April 8th, 1880

MY DEAR FERRIER,—Many thanks for your letter, and the instalment of *Forester* which accompanied it, and which I read with amusement and pleasure. I fear Somerset's letter must wait ; for my dear boy, I have been very nearly on a longer voyage than usual ; I am fresh from giving Charon a quid instead of an obolus : but he, having accepted the payment, scorned me, and I had to make the best of my way backward through the mallow-wood with nothing to show for this displacement, but the fatigue of the journey. As soon as I feel fit, you shall have the letter, trust me. But just now even a note such as I am now writing takes it out of me. I have, truly, been very sick ; I fear I am a vain man, for I thought it a pity I should die. I could not help thinking that a good many would be disappointed ; but for myself, although I still think life a business full of agreeable features I was not entirely unwilling to give it up. It is so difficult to behave well ; and



in that matter, I get more dissatisfied with myself, because more exigent, every day. I shall be pleased to hear again from you soon. I shall be married early in May and then go to the mountains, a very withered bridegroom. I think your MS. Bible, if that were a specimen, would be a credit to humanity. Between whiles, collect such thoughts both from yourself and others : I somehow believe every man should leave a Bible behind him,—if he is unable to leave a jest book. I feel fit to leave nothing but my benediction. It is a strange thing how, do what you will, nothing seems accomplished. I feel as far from having paid humanity my board and lodging as I did six years ago when I was sick at Mentone. But I daresay the devil would keep telling me so, if I had moved mountains, and at least I have been very happy on many different occasions, and that is always something. I can read nothing, write nothing ; but a little while ago and I could eat nothing either ; but now that is changed. This is a long letter for me ; rub your hands, boy, for 'tis an honour.—Yours, from Charon's strand,  
R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

A poetical counterpart to this letter will be found in the piece beginning " Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert," which was composed at the same time and is printed in *Underwoods*.

[*San Francisco, April 16, 1880*]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—You have not answered my last ; and I know you will repent when you hear how near I have been to another world. For about six weeks I have been in utter doubt ; it was a toss-up for life or death all that time ; but I won the toss, sir, and Hades went off once more discomfited. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that I have a friendly game with that gentleman. I know he will end by cleaning me out ; but the rogue is insidious, and the habit of that sort of gambling seems to be a part of my nature ; it was, I suspect, too much indulged in youth ; break your children of this tendency, my dear

Gosse, from the first. It is, when once formed, a habit more fatal than opium—I speak, as St. Paul says, like a fool. I have been very very sick ; on the verge of a galloping consumption, cold sweats, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which I lost the power of speech, fever, and all the ugliest circumstances of the disease ; and I have cause to bless God, my wife that is to be, and one Dr. Bamford (a name the Muse repels), that I have come out of all this, and got my feet once more upon a little hilltop, with a fair prospect of life and some new desire of living. Yet I did not wish to die, neither ; only I felt unable to go on farther with that rough horseplay of human life : a man must be pretty well to take the business in good part. Yet I felt all the time that I had done nothing to entitle me to an honourable discharge ; that I had taken up many obligations and begun many friendships which I had no right to put away from me ; and that for me to die was to play the cur and slinking sybarite, and desert the colours on the eve of the decisive fight. Of course I have done no work for I do not know how long ; and here you can triumph. I have been reduced to writing verses for amusement. A fact. The whirligig of time brings in its revenges, after all. But I'll have them buried with me, I think, for I have not the heart to burn them while I live. Do write. I shall go to the mountains as soon as the weather clears ; on the way thither, I marry myself ; then I set up my family altar among the pine-woods, 3000 feet, sir, from the disputatious sea.—I am, dear Weg, most truly yours,

R. L. S.

TO DR. W. BAMFORD

With a copy of *Travels with a Donkey*.

[San Francisco, April, 1880]

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you let me offer you this little book ? If I had anything better, it should be yours. May you not dislike it, for it will be your own handiwork if



there are other fruits from the same tree ! But for your kindness and skill, this would have been my last book, and now I am in hopes that it will be neither my last nor my best.

You doctors have a serious responsibility. You recall a man from the gates of death, you give him health and strength once more to use or to abuse. I hope I shall feel your responsibility added to my own, and seek in the future to make a better profit of the life you have renewed to me.— I am, my dear sir, gratefully yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*San Francisco, April, 1880*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—You must be sick indeed of my demand for books, for you have seemingly not yet sent me one. Still, I live on promises : waiting for Penn, for H. James's *Hawthorne*, for my *Burns*, etc. ; and now, to make matters worse, pending your centuries, etc., I do earnestly desire the best book about mythology (if it be German, so much the worse ; send a bunctionary along with it, and pray for me). This is why. If I recover, I feel called on to write a volume of gods and demi-gods in exile : Pan, Jove, Cybele, Venus, Charon, etc. ; and though I should like to take them very free, I should like to know a little about 'em to begin with. For two days, till last night, I had no night sweats, and my cough is almost gone, and I digest well ; so all looks hopeful. However, I was near the other side of Jordan. I send the proof of *Thoreau* to you, so that you may correct and fill up the quotation from Goethe. It is a pity I was ill, as, for matter, I think I prefer that to any of my essays except *Burns* ; but the style, though quite manly, never attains any melody or lenity. So much for consumption : I begin to appreciate what the *Emigrant* must be. As soon as I have done the

last few pages of the *Emigrant* they shall go to you. But when will that be? I know not quite yet—I have to be so careful.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*San Francisco, May, 1880*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—My dear people telegraphed me in these words: “Count on 250 pounds annually.” You may imagine what a blessed business this was. And so now recover the sheets of the *Emigrant*, and post them registered to me. And now please give me all your venom against it; say your worst, and most incisively, for now it will be a help, and I’ll make it right or perish in the attempt. Now, do you understand why I protested against your depressing eloquence on the subject? When I *had* to go on any way, for dear life, I thought it a kind of pity and not much good to discourage me. Now all’s changed. God only knows how much courage and suffering is buried in that MS. The second part was written in a circle of hell unknown to Dante—that of the penniless and dying author. For dying I was, although now saved. Another week, the doctor said, and I should have been past salvation. I think I shall always think of it as my best work. There is one page in Part II., about having got to shore, and sich, which must have cost me altogether six hours of work as miserable as ever I went through. I feel sick even to think of it.—Ever your friend,

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*San Francisco, May, 1880*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I received your letter and proof to-day, and was greatly delighted with the last.



I am now out of danger ; in but a short while (*i.e.* as soon as the weather is settled), F. and I marry and go up to the hills to look for a place ; “ I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid ” ; once the place found, the furniture will follow. There, sir, in, I hope, a ranche, among the pine-trees and hard by a running brook, we are to fish, hunt, sketch, study Spanish, French, Latin, Euclid, and History ; and, if possible, not quarrel. Far from man, sir, in the virgin forest. Thence, as my strength returns, you may expect works of genius. I always feel as if I must write a work of genius some time or other ; and when is it more likely to come off, than just after I have paid a visit to Styx and go thence to the eternal mountains ? Such a revolution in a man’s affairs, as I have somewhere written, would set anybody singing. When we get installed, Lloyd and I are going to print my poetical works ; so all those who have been poetically addressed shall receive copies of their addresses. They are, I believe, pretty correct literary exercises, or will be, with a few filings ; but they are not remarkable for white-hot vehemence of inspiration ; tepid works ! respectable versifications of very proper and even original sentiments : kind of Hayleyistic, I fear—but no, this is morbid self-depreciation. The family is all very shaky in health, but our motto is now *Al Monte !* in the words of Don Lope, in the play the sister and I are just beating through with two bad dictionaries and an insane grammar. I to the hills.—Yours ever,  
R. L. S.

TO C. W. STODDARD

This correspondent is the late Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, author of *Summer Cruising in the South Seas*, etc., with whom Stevenson had made friends in the manner and amid the scenes faithfully described in *The Wrecker*, in the chapter called “ Faces on the City Front.”

East Oakland, Cal., May, 1880

MY DEAR STODDARD,—I am guilty in thy sight and the sight of God.. However, I swore a great oath that you

should see some of my manuscript at last ; and though I have long delayed to keep it, yet it was to be. You re-read your story and were disgusted ; that is the cold fit following the hot. I don't say you did wrong to be disgusted, yet I am sure you did wrong to be disgusted altogether. There was, you may depend upon it, some reason for your previous vanity, as well as your present mortification. I shall hear you, years from now, timidly begin to retrim your feathers for a little self-laudation, and trot out this misdespised novelette as not the worst of your performances. I read the album extracts with sincere interest ; but I regret that you spared to give the paper more development ; and I conceive that you might do a great deal worse than expand each of its paragraphs into an essay or sketch, the excuse being in each case your personal intercourse ; the bulk, when that would not be sufficient, to be made up from their own works and stories. Three at least—Menken, Yelverton, and Keeler—could not fail of a vivid human interest. Let me press upon you this plan ; should any document be wanted from Europe, let me offer my services to procure it. I am persuaded that there is stuff in the idea.

Are you coming over again to see me some day soon ? I keep returning, and now hand over fist, from the realms of Hades : I saw that gentleman between the eyes, and fear him less after each visit. Only Charon, and his rough boatmanship, I somewhat fear.

I have a desire to write some verses for your album ; so, if you will give me the entry among your gods, goddesses, and godlets, there will be nothing wanting but the Muse. I think of the verses like Mark Twain ; sometimes I wish fulsomely to belaud you ; sometimes to insult your city and fellow-citizens ; sometimes to sit down quietly, with the slender reed, and troll a few staves of Panic ecstasy—but fy ! fy ! as my ancestors observed, the last is too easy for a man of my feet and inches.

At least, Stoddard, you now see that, although so costive, when I once begin I am a copious letter-writer. I thank you and *au revoir*.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[San Francisco, May, 1880]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—It is a long while since I have heard from you ; nearly a month, I believe ; and I begin to grow very uneasy. At first I was tempted to suppose that I had been myself to blame in some way ; but now I have grown to fear lest some sickness or trouble among those whom you love may not be the impediment. I believe I shall soon hear ; so I wait as best I can. I am, beyond a doubt, greatly stronger, and yet still useless for any work, and I may say, for any pleasure. My affairs and the bad weather still keep me here unmarried ; but not, I earnestly hope, for long. Whenever I get into the mountain, I trust I shall rapidly pick up. Until I get away from these sea fogs and my imprisonment in the house, I do not hope to do much more than keep from active harm. My doctor took a desponding fit about me, and scared Fanny into blue fits ; but I have talked her over again. It is the change I want, and the blessed sun, and a gentle air in which I can sit out and see the trees and running water : these mere defensive hygienics cannot advance one, though they may prevent evil. I do nothing now, but try to possess my soul in peace, and continue to possess my body on any terms.

*Calistoga, Napa County, California.*—All which is a fortnight old and not much to the point nowadays. Here we are, Fanny and I, and a certain hound, in a lovely valley under Mount Saint Helena, looking around, or rather wondering when we shall begin to look around, for a house of our own. I have received the first sheets of the *Amateur Emigrant* ; not yet the second bunch, as announced. It is a pretty heavy, emphatic piece of pedantry ; but I don't care ; the public, I verily believe, will like it. I have excised all you proposed and more on my own movement. But I have not yet been able to rewrite the two special pieces which, as you said, so badly wanted it ; it is hard work to rewrite passages in proof ; and the easiest work is still hard to me. But I am certainly recovering fast ; a married and convalescent being.

Received James's *Hawthorne*, on which I meditate a blast, Miss Bird, Dixon's *Penn*, a *wrong Cornhill* (like my luck) and *Coquelin* : for all which, and especially the last, I tender my best thanks. I have opened only James ; it is very clever, very well written, and out of sight the most inside-out thing in the world ; I have dug up the hatchet ; a scalp shall flutter at my belt ere long. I think my new book should be good ; it will contain our adventures for the summer, so far as these are worth narrating ; and I have already a few pages of diary which should make up bright. I am going to repeat my old experiment, after buckling-to a while to write more correctly, lie down and have a wallow. Whether I shall get any of my novels done this summer I do not know ; I wish to finish the *Vendetta* first, for it really could not come after *Prince Otto*. Lewis Campbell has made some noble work in that Agamemnon ; it surprised me. We hope to get a house at Silverado, a deserted mining-camp eight miles up the mountain, now solely inhabited by a mighty hunter answering to the name of Rufe Hansome, who slew last year a hundred and fifty deer. This is the motto I propose for the new volume : "*Vixerunt nonnulli in agris, delectati re sua familiari. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne qua re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur ; cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis.*" I always have a terror lest the wish should have been father to the translation, when I come to quote ; but that seems too plain sailing. I should put *regibus* in capitals for the pleasantry's sake. We are in the Coast range, that being so much cheaper to reach ; the family, I hope, will soon follow. Love to all.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.





VI

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND  
SUMMERS

AUGUST, 1880—OCTOBER, 1882





## VI

### ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

AFTER spending the months of June and July, 1880, in the rough Californian mountain quarters described in the *Silverado Squatters*, Stevenson took passage with his wife and young step-son from New York on the 7th of August, and arrived on the 17th at Liverpool, where his parents and I were waiting to meet him. Of her new family, the Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson brought thus strangely and from far into their midst made an immediate conquest. To her husband's especial happiness, there sprang up between her and his father the closest possible affection and confidence. Parents and friends—if it is permissible to one of the latter to say as much—rejoiced to recognise in Stevenson's wife a character as strong, interesting, and romantic almost as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and efficient of nurses.

From Liverpool the Stevenson party went on to make a stay in Scotland, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards for a few weeks at Strathpeffer, resting at Blair Athol on the way. It was now, in his thirtieth year, among the woods of Tummelside and under the shoulder of Ben Wyvis, that Stevenson acknowledged for the first time the full power and beauty of the Highland scenery, which in youth, with his longings fixed ever upon the South, he had been accustomed to think too bleak and desolate. In the history of the country and its clans, on the other hand, and especi-



ally of their political and social transformation during the eighteenth century, he had been always keenly interested. In conversations with Principal Tulloch at Strathpeffer this interest was now revived, and he resolved to attempt a book on the subject, his father undertaking to keep him supplied with books and authorities ; for it had quickly become apparent that he could not winter in Scotland. The state of his health continued to be very threatening. He suffered from acute chronic catarrh, accompanied by disquieting lung symptoms and great weakness ; and was told accordingly that he must go for the winter, and probably for several succeeding winters, to the mountain valley of Davos in Switzerland, which within the last few years had been coming into repute as a place of recovery, or at least of arrested mischief, for lung patients. Thither he and his wife and step-son travelled accordingly at the end of October. Nor must another member of the party be forgotten, a black thoroughbred Skye terrier, the gift of Sir Walter Simpson. This creature was named, after his giver, Walter—a name subsequently corrupted into Wattie, Woggie, Wogg, Woggin, Bogie, Bogue, and a number of other affectionate diminutives which will be found occurring often enough in the following pages. He was a remarkably pretty, engaging, excitable, ill-behaved little specimen of his race, the occasion of infinite anxiety and laughing care to his devoted master and mistress until his death six years later.

The Davos of 1880, approached by an eight-hours laborious drive up the valley of the Prättigau, was a very different place from the extended and embellished Davos of to-day, with its railway, its modern shops, its electric lighting, and its crowd of winter visitors bent on outdoor and indoor entertainment. The Stevensons' quarters for the first winter were at the Hotel Belvedere, then a mere nucleus of the huge establishment it has since become. Besides the usual society of an invalid hotel, with its mingled tragedies and comedies, they had there the great advantage of the presence, in a neighbouring house, of an accomplished man of letters and one of the most charming of

companions, John Addington Symonds, with his family. Mr. Symonds, whose health had been desperate before he tried the place, was a living testimony to its virtues, and was at this time engaged in building the chalet which became his home until he died fourteen years later. During Stevenson's first season at Davos, though his mind was full of literary enterprises, he was too ill to do much actual work. For the Highland history he read much, but composed little or nothing, and eventually this history went to swell the long list of his unwritten books. He saw through the press his first volume of collected essays, *Virginibus Puerisque*, which came out early in 1881; wrote the essays *Samuel Pepys* and *The Morality of the Profession of Letters*, for the *Cornhill* and the *Fortnightly Review* respectively, and sent to the *Pall Mall Gazette* the papers on the life and climate of Davos, posthumously reprinted in *Essays of Travel*. Beyond this, he only amused himself with verses, some of them afterwards published in *Underwoods*. Leaving the Alps at the end of April, 1881, he returned, after a short stay in France (at Fontainebleau, Paris, and St. Germain), to his family in Edinburgh. Thence the whole party again went to the Highlands, this time to Pitlochry and Braemar.

During the summer Stevenson heard of the intended retirement of Professor Æneas Mackay from the chair of History and Constitutional Law at Edinburgh University. He determined, with the encouragement of the outgoing professor and of several of his literary friends, to become a candidate for the post, which had to be filled by the Faculty of Advocates from among their own number. The duties were limited to the delivery of a short course of lectures in the summer term, and Stevenson thought that he might be equal to them, and might prove, though certainly a new, yet perhaps a stimulating, type of professor. But knowing the nature of his public reputation, especially in Edinburgh, where the recollection of his daft student days was as yet stronger than the impression made by his recent performances in literature, he was well aware that his candidature must seem paradoxical, and stood little



chance of success. The election took place in the late autumn of the same year, and he was defeated, receiving only three votes.

At Pitlochry Stevenson was for a while able to enjoy his life and to work well, writing two of the strongest of his short stories of Scottish life and superstition, *Thrawn Janet* and *The Merry Men*, originally designed to form part of a volume to be written by himself and his wife in collaboration. At Braemar he made a beginning of the nursery verses which afterwards grew into the volume called *The Child's Garden*, and conceived and half executed the fortunate project of *Treasure Island*, the book which was destined first to make him famous. But one of the most inclement of Scottish summers had before long undone all the good gained in the previous winter at Davos, and in the autumn of the year 1881 he repaired thither again.

This time his quarters were in a small chalet belonging to the proprietors of the Buol Hotel, the Chalet am Stein, or Chalet Buol, in the near neighbourhood of the Symonds's house. The beginning of his second stay was darkened by the serious illness of his wife; nevertheless the winter was one of much greater literary activity than the last. A Life of Hazlitt was projected, and studies were made for it, but for various reasons the project was never carried out. *Treasure Island* was finished; the greater part of the *Silverado Squatters* written; so were the essays *Talk and Talkers*, *A Gossip on Romance*, and several other of his best papers for magazines. By way of whim and pastime he occupied himself, to his own and his step-son's delight, with a little set of woodcuts and verses printed by the latter at his toy press—"The Davos Press," as they called it—as well as with mimic campaigns carried on between the man and boy with armies of lead soldiers in the spacious loft which filled the upper floor of the chalet. For the first and almost the only time in his life there awoke in him during these winters in Davos the spirit of lampoon; and he poured forth sets of verses, not without touches of a Swiftean fire, against commercial frauds in general, and those of certain local tradesmen in particular, as well as others in memory of a



defunct publican of Edinburgh who had been one of his butts in youth (*Casparidea* and *Brashiana*, both unpublished). Finally, much revived in health by the beneficent air of the Alpine valley, he left it again in midspring of 1882, to return once more to Scotland, and to be once more thrown back to, or below, the point whence he had started. After a short excursion from Edinburgh into the Appin country, where he made inquiries on the spot into the traditions concerning the murder of Campbell of Glenure, his three resting-places in Scotland during this summer were Stobo Manse near Peebles, Lochearnhead, and Kingussie. At Stobo the dampness of the season and the place quickly threw him again into a very low state of health, from which three subsequent weeks of brilliant sunshine in Speyside did but little to restore him. In spite of this renewed breakdown, when autumn came he would not face the idea of returning for a third season to Davos. He had himself felt deeply the austerity and monotony of the white Alpine world in winter; and though he had unquestionably gained in health there, his wife on her part had suffered much. So he made up his mind once again to try the Mediterranean coast of France, and Davos knew him no more.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I forget what were the two sets of verses (apparently satirical) here mentioned. The volume of essays must be *Virginibus Puerisque*, published the following spring ; but it is dedicated in prose to W. E. Henley.

*Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer [July, 1880]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—One or two words. We are here : all goes exceeding well with the wife and with the parents. Near here is a valley ; birch woods, heather, and a stream ; I have lain down and died ; no country, no place, was ever for a moment so delightful to my soul. And I have been a Scotchman all my life, and denied my native land ! Away with your gardens of roses, indeed ! Give me the cool breath of Rogie waterfall, henceforth and for ever, world without end.

I enclose two poems of, I think, a high order. One is my dedication for my essays ; it was occasioned by that delicious article in the *Spectator*. The other requires no explanation ; c'est tout bonnement un petit chef d'œuvre de grâce, de délicatesse, et de bon sens humanitaire. Celui qui ne s'en sent pas touché jusqu'aux larmes—celui-là n'a pas vécu. I wish both poems back, as I am copyless : but they might return *via* Henley.

My father desires me still to withdraw the *Emigrant*. Whatever may be the pecuniary loss, he is willing to bear it ; and the gain to my reputation will be considerable.

I am writing against time and the post runner. But you know what kind messages we both send to you. May you have as good a time as possible so far from Rogie !

R. L. S.

## TO CHARLES BAXTER

A further stay at Strathpeffer led to disenchantment, not with outdoor nature, but with human nature as there represented, and he relieves his feelings as follows :

*Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer, July, 1880*

MY DEAR CHERLS,—I am well but have a little overtired

myself which is disgusting. This is a heathenish place near delightful places, but inhabited, alas ! by a wholly bestial crowd.

### ON SOME GHOSTLY COMPANIONS AT A SPA

I had an evil day when I  
To Strathpeffer drew anigh,  
For there I found no human soul,  
But Ogres occupied the whole.  
They had at first a human air  
In coats and flannel underwear.  
They rose and walked upon their feet  
And filled their bellies full of meat,  
They wiped their lips when they had done—  
But they were ogres every one.  
Each issuing from his secret bower  
I marked them in the morning hour.  
By limp and totter, list and droop  
I singled each one from the group.  
Detected ogres, from my sight  
Depart to your congenial night  
From these fair vales : from this fair day  
Fleet, spectres, on your downward way,  
Like changing figures in a dream  
To Muttonhole and Pittenweem !  
Or, as by harmony divine  
The devils quartered in the swine,  
If any baser place exist  
In God's great registration list—  
Some den with wallow and a trough—  
Find it, ye ogres, and be off !

Yours, R. L. S.

### TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

I do not know what was the "tragi-comedy" here mentioned ; nor have I any recollection of the second dog, "Chuchullin."

*The Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria Station,  
Belgravia, London, S.W., late October 1880*

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—My heart was ashamed at your letter ; but a long rigmarole had just gone off from Fanny, so I delayed still. You cannot conceive what annoyances I have had, most having cleared away. We had hoped for



sure to be out of this yesterday, but it was impossible. I hope to-morrow we shall get away. I cannot tell you the sort of tragi-comedy I have been marching about in, but Paul has behaved so well that I am his bond-slave for life. He may now fleece me till all is blue ; we dine there to-night. Manxy is entrusted to Katharine ; Chuchullin is a most delightful dog. Gen. Robertson called and presented me with Hamley's *Operations of War*, in which I am now drowned a thousand fathom deep. And O ! that I had been a soldier ! is still my cry. I am terrified at this hotel ; but I hope to-morrow we get to Paris, Poste Restante, where I know how to live cheap and well. I decided on Coester, as the other house might not have been ready for any time. Jenkin has been of very good counsel in this and my tragi-comedy. Please do not ask me about this just now ; Jenk will tell you the outline, and I have not yet learned to speak of it with fortitude. I bear the fogs wonderfully ; but O I long to be out of this den. David Park came to see us, which was very kind.

[*Postscript by Mrs. R. L. S.*] Don't be frightened at Louis' tragic manner of speaking ; we had thought the affair much worse than it is and it has turned out comparatively nothing.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[*Landquart, Nov. 5, 1880*]

MY DEAR FOLK,—The Alps are all there : they beat everything to smash. This place and a great part of the way up yesterday was NO End. I am writing this as we wait the coach to take us to Davos, where we get for supper, and all our troubles of one kind at least, I hope at an end. Once we are settled I hereby promise, out of a troubled conscience, that you shall receive not less than three letters a week. It has snowed last night on both sides of the valley, and the stone hills are whiter, and white lower down, than when we went to bed. It is cold, too ; but to-day the sun shines and a cold, moaning wind that blew last evening.

has moaned itself away and left the air still. We are taking charge of some extraordinary people, up to Davos ; they are a couple, and make three such wandering, dumb sheep, whom we have comforted on that journey.

afft. son,

R. L. S.

### TO ISOBEL STRONG

Written in answer to an enquiry from his step-daughter at San Francisco, on the second day after his arrival at Davos.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November, 1880*

No my che-ild—not Kamschatka this trip, only the top of the Alps, or thereby ; up in a little valley in a wilderness of snowy mountains ; the Rhine not far from us, quite a little highland river ; eternal snow-peaks on every hand. Yes ; just this once I should like to go to the Vienna gardens \* with the family and hear Tweedle-dee drink something and see Germans—though God knows we have seen Germans enough this while back. Naturally some in the Customs House on the Alsatian frontier, who would have made one die from laughing in a theatre, and provoked a smile from us even in that dismal juncture. To see them, big blond, sham-Englishmen but with an unqualifiable air of not quite fighting the sham through, diving into old women's bags and going into paroxysms of arithmetic in white chalk, three or four of them (in full uniform) in full cry upon a single sum, with their brows bent and a kind of arithmetical agony upon their mugs. Madam, the diversion of cock-fighting has been much commended, but it was not a circumstance to that Custom House. They only opened one of our things : a basket. But when they met from within the intelligent gaze of *Woggs*, they all lay down and died. *Woggs* is a fine dog. . . .

God bless you ! May coins fall into your coffee and the finest wines and wittles lie smilingly about your path, with a kind of dissolving view of fine scenery by way of back-

\* In San Francisco.



ground ; and may all speak well of you—and me too for that matter—and generally all things be ordered unto you totally regardless of expense and with a view to nothing in the world but enjoyment, edification, and a portly and honoured age.—Your dear papa,

R. L. S.

### TO A. G. DEW-SMITH

Written soon after his arrival at Davos, and addressed by way of thanks to a friend at Cambridge, the late Mr. A. G. Dew-Smith, who had sent him a present of a box of cigarettes. Mr. Dew-Smith, a man of fine artistic tastes and mechanical genius, with a silken, somewhat foreign urbanity of bearing, was the original, so far as concerns manner and way of speech, of Attwater in the *Ebb-Tide*.

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November, 1880*]

FIGURE me to yourself, I pray—

A man of my peculiar cut—  
Apart from dancing and deray,\*  
Into an Alpine valley shut ;

Shut in a kind of damned Hotel,  
Discountenanced by God and man ;  
The food ?—Sir, you would do as well  
To cram your belly full of bran.

The company ? Alas, the day  
That I should dwell with such a crew,  
With devil anything to say,  
Nor any one to say it to !

The place ? Although they call it Platz,  
I will be bold and state my view ;  
It's not a place at all—and that's  
The bottom verity, my Dew.

\* "The whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons."—See *Wandering Willie's Tale* in *Redgauntlet*, borrowed perhaps from *Christ's Kirk of the Green*.



There are, as I will not deny,  
Innumerable inns ; a road ;  
Several Alps indifferent high ;  
The snow's inviolable abode ;

Eleven English parsons, all  
Entirely inoffensive ; four  
True human beings—what I call  
Human—the deuce a cipher more ;

A climate of surprising worth ;  
Innumerable dogs that bark ;  
Some air, some weather, and some earth ;  
A native race—God save the mark !—

A race that works, yet cannot work,  
Yodels, but cannot yodel right,  
Such as, unhelp'd, with rusty dirk,  
I vow that I could wholly smite.

A river \* that from morn to night  
Down all the valley plays the fool ;  
Not once she pauses in her flight,  
Nor knows the comfort of a pool ;

But still keeps up, by straight or bend,  
The selfsame pace she hath begun—  
Still hurry, hurry, to the end—  
Good God, is that the way to run ?

If I a river were, I hope  
That I should better realise  
The opportunities and scope  
Of that romantic enterprise.

I should not ape the merely strange,  
But aim besides at the divine ;  
And continuity and change  
I still should labour to combine.

\* The Davoser Landwasser.

Here should I gallop down the race,  
 Here charge the sterling \* like a bull ;  
 There, as a man might wipe his face,  
 Lie, pleased and panting, in a pool.

But what, my Dew, in idle mood,  
 What prate I, minding not my debt ?  
 What do I talk of bad or good ?  
 The best is still a cigarette.

Me whether evil fate assault,  
 Or smiling providences crown—  
 Whether on high the eternal vault  
 Be blue, or crash with thunder down—

I judge the best, whate'er befall,  
 Is still to sit on one's behind,  
 And, having duly moistened all,  
 Smoke with an unperturbèd mind.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December, 1880*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I feel better, but variable. I see from the doctor's report that I have more actual disease than I supposed ; but there seems little doubt of my recovery. I like the place and shall like it much better when you come at Christmas. That is written on my heart : S. C. comes at Christmas : so if you play me false, I shall have a lie upon my conscience. I like Symonds very well, though he is much, I think, of an invalid in mind and character. But his mind is interesting, with many beautiful corners, and his consumptive smile very winning to see. We have had some good talks ; one went over Zola, Balzac, Flaubert, Whitman, Christ, Handel, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne ; do you see the *liaison* ?—in another, I, the Bohnist, the un-Grecian, was the means of his conversion in the

\* In architecture, a series of piles to defend the pier of a bridge.

matter of the Ajax. It is truly not for nothing that I have read my Buckley.\*

To-day, the south wind blows ; and I am seedy in consequence.

*Later.*—I want to know when you are coming, so as to get you a room. You will toboggan and skate your head off, and I will talk it off, and briefly if you don't come pretty soon, I will cut you off with a shilling.

It would be handsome of you to write. The doctor says I may be as well as ever ; but in the meantime I go slow and am fit for little.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

The suggestions contained in the following two letters to Mr. Gosse refer to the collection of English Odes which that gentleman was then engaged in editing (Kegan Paul, 1881).

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [Dec. 6, 1880]*

MY DEAR WEG,—I have many letters that I ought to write in preference to this ; but a duty to letters and to you prevails over any private consideration. You are going to collect odes ; I could not wish a better man to do so ; but I tremble lest you should commit two sins of omission. You will not, I am sure, be so far left to yourself as to give us no more of Dryden than the hackneyed *St. Cecilia* ; I know you will give us some others of those surprising masterpieces where there is more sustained eloquence and harmony of English numbers than in all that has been written since ; there is a machine about a poetical young lady,† and another about either Charles or James, I know not which ; and they are both indescribably fine. (Is Marvell's Horatian Ode good enough ? I half think so.) But my great point is a fear that you are one of those who are unjust to our old Tennyson's *Duke of Wellington*. I have just been

\* The translator of *Sophocles* in Bohn's Classics.

† Anne Killigrew.



talking it over with Symonds ; and we agreed that whether for its metrical effects, for its brief, plain, stirring words of portraiture, as—he “ that never lost an English gun,” or—the soldier salute ; or for the heroic apostrophe to Nelson ; that ode has never been surpassed in any tongue or time. Grant me the Duke, O Weg ! I suppose you must not put in yours about the warship ; you will have to admit worse ones, however.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

R. L. S. here sketches for his father the plan of the work on Highland History which they had discussed together in the preceding summer, and which Principal Tulloch had urged him to attempt.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [December 12, 1880]*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Here is the scheme as well as I can foresee. I begin the book immediately after the '15, as then began the attempt to suppress the Highlands.

### I. THIRTY YEARS' INTERVAL

- (1) Rob Roy.
- (2) The Independent Companies : the Watches.
- (3) Story of Lady Grange.
- (4) The Military Roads, and Disarmament : Wade  
and
- (5) Burt.

### II. THE HEROIC AGE

- (1) Duncan Forbes of Culloden.
- (2) Flora Macdonald.
- (3) The Forfeited Estates ; including Hereditary Jurisdictions ; and the admirable conduct of the tenants.

### III. LITERATURE HERE INTERVENES

- (1) The Ossianic Controversy.
- (2) Boswell and Johnson.
- (3) Mrs. Grant of Laggan.

## IV. ECONOMY

- (1) Highland Economics.
- (2) The Reinstatement of the Proprietors.
- (3) The Evictions.
- (4) Emigration.
- (5) Present State.

## V. RELIGION

- (1) The Catholics, Episcopalians, and Kirk, and Soc. Prop. Christ. Knowledge.
- (2) The Men.
- (3) The Disruption.

All this, of course, will greatly change in form, scope, and order; this is just a bird's-eye glance. Thank you for *Burt*, which came, and for your Union notes. I have read one-half (about 900 pages) of Wodrow's *Correspondence*, with some improvement, but great fatigue. The doctor thinks well of my recovery, which puts me in good hope for the future. I should certainly be able to make a fine history of this.

My Essays are going through the press, and should be out in January or February.—Ever affectionate son,  
R. L. S.

## TO EDMUND GOSSE

[*Hotel Belvedere*], Davos, Dec. 19, 1880

THIS letter is a report of a long sederunt, also steterunt in small committee at Davos Platz, Dec. 15, 1880. Its results are unhesitatingly shot at your head.

MY DEAR WEG,—We both insist on the *Duke of Wellington*. Really it cannot be left out. Symonds said you would cover yourself with shame, and I add, your friends with confusion, if you leave it out. Really, you know it is the only thing you have, since Dryden, where that irregular

odic, odal, odous (?) verse is used with mastery and sense. And it's one of our few English blood-boilers.

(2) Byron : if anything : *Prometheus*.

(3) Shelley (1) *The World's Great Age* from Hellas we are both dead on. After that you have, of course, *The West Wind* thing. But we think (1) would maybe be enough ; no more than two anyway.

(4) Herrick. *Meddowes* and *Come, my Corinna*. After that *Mr. Wickes* : two anyway.

(5) Leave out stanza 3rd of Congreve's thing, like a dear ; we can't stand the " sigh " nor the " peruke."

(6) Milton. *Time* and the *Solemn Music*. We both agree we would rather go without *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* than these ; for the reason that these are not so well known to the brutish herd.

(7) Is the *Royal George* an ode, or only an elegy ? It's so good.

(8) We leave Campbell to you.

(9) If you take anything from Clough, but we don't either of us fancy you will, let it be *Come back*.

(10) Quite right about Dryden. I had a hankering after *Threnodia Augustalis* ; but I find it long and with very prosaic holes : though, O ! what fine stuff between whiles.

(11) Right with Collins.

(12) Right about Pope's Ode. But what can you give ? *The Dying Christian* ? or one of his inimitable courtesies ? These last are fairly odes, by the Horatian model, just as my dear *Meddowes* is an ode in the name and for the sake of *Bandusia*.

(13) Whatever you do, you'll give us the *Greek Vase*.

(14) Do you like Jonson's " loathèd stage " ? Verses 2, 3, and 4 are so bad, also the last line. But there is a fine movement and feeling in the rest.

We will have the *Duke of Wellington* by God. Pro Symonds and Stevenson.

R. L. S.



## TO CHARLES WARREN STODDARD

The prospect here alluded to of a cheap edition of the little travel-books did not get for the time being realised. The volume of essays in the printer's hands was *Virginibus Puerisque*. I do not know what were the pages in broad Scotch copied by way of enclosure.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [December, 1880]*

DEAR CHARLES WARREN STODDARD,—Many thanks to you for the letter and the photograph. Will you think it mean if I ask you to wait till there appears a promised cheap edition? Possibly the canny Scot does feel pleasure in the superior cheapness; but the true reason is this, that I think to put a few words, by way of notes, to each book in its new form, because that will be the Standard Edition, without which no g.'s l.\* will be complete. The edition, briefly, *sine qua non*. Before that, I shall hope to send you my essays, which are in the printer's hands. I look to get yours soon. I am sorry to hear that the Custom House has proved fallible, like all other human houses and customs. Life consists of that sort of business, and I fear that there is a class of man, of which you offer no inapt type, doomed to a kind of mild, general disappointment through life. I do not believe that a man is the more unhappy for that. Disappointment, except with one's self, is not a very capital affair; and the sham beatitude, "Blessed is he that expecteth little," one of the truest, and in a sense, the most Christlike things in literature.

Alongside of you, I have been all my days a red cannon ball of dissipated effort; here I am by the heels in this Alpine valley, with just so much of a prospect of future restoration as shall make my present caged estate easily tolerable to me—shall or should, I would not swear to the word before the trial's done. I miss all my objects in the meantime; and, thank God, I have enough of my old, and maybe somewhat base philosophy, to keep me on a good understanding with myself and Providence.

The mere extent of a man's travels has in it something consolatory. That he should have left friends and enemies

\* Gentleman's library.

in many different and distant quarters gives a sort of earthly dignity to his existence. And I think the better of myself for the belief that I have left some in California interested in me and my successes. Let me assure you, you who have made friends already among such various and distant races, that there is a certain phthisical Scot who will always be pleased to hear good news of you, and would be better pleased by nothing than to learn that you had thrown off your present incubus, largely consisting of letters I believe, and had sailed into some square work by way of change.

And by way of change in itself, let me copy on the other pages some broad Scotch I wrote for you when I was ill last spring in Oakland. It is no muckle worth : but ye should na look a gien horse in the moo'.—Yours ever,

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The verses, here mentioned, to Dr. John Brown (the admired author of *Rab and His Friends*) were meant as a reply to a letter of congratulation on the *Inland Voyage* received from him the year before. They are printed in *Underwoods*.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December 21, 1880*

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—I do not understand these reproaches. The letters come between seven and nine in the evening ; and every one about the books was answered that same night, and the answer left Davos by seven o'clock next morning. Perhaps the snow delayed them ; if so, 'tis a good hint to you not to be too uneasy at apparent silences. There is no hurry about my father's notes ; I shall not be writing anything till I get home again, I believe. Only I want to be able to keep reading *ad hoc* all winter, as it seems about all I shall be fit for. About John Brown, I have been breaking my heart to finish a Scotch poem to him. Some of it is not really bad, but the rest will not come, and I mean to get it right before I do anything else.

The bazaar is over, £160 gained, and everybody's health



lost : altogether, I never had a more uncomfortable time ; apply to Fanny for further details of the discomfort.

We have our Wogg in somewhat better trim now, and vastly better spirits. The weather has been bad—for Davos, but indeed it is a wonderful climate. It never feels cold ; yesterday, with a little, chill, small, northerly draught, for the first time, it was pinching. Usually, it may freeze, or snow, or do what it pleases, you feel it not, or hardly any.

Thanks for your notes ; that fishery question will come in, as you notice, in the Highland Book, as well as under the Union ; it is very important. I hear no word of Hugh Miller's *Evictions* ; I count on that. What you say about the old and new Statistical is odd. It seems to me very much as if I were gingerly embarking on a *History of Modern Scotland*. Probably Tulloch will never carry it out. And, you see, once I have studied and written these two vols., *The Transformation of the Scottish Highlands and Scotland and the Union*, I shall have a good ground to go upon. The effect on my mind of what I have read has been to awaken a livelier sympathy for the Irish ; although they never had the remarkable virtues, I fear they have suffered many of the injustices, of the Scottish Highlanders. Ruedi has seen me this morning ; he says the disease is at a standstill, and I am to profit by it to take more exercise. Altogether, he seemed quite hopeful and pleased.—I am your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [Christmas, 1880]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thanks for yours ; I waited, as I said I would. I now expect no answer from you, regarding you as a mere dumb cock-shy, or a target, at which we fire our arrows diligently all day long, with no anticipation it will bring them back to us. We are both sadly mortified you are not coming, but health comes first ; alas, that man



should be so crazy. What fun we could have, if we were all well, what work we could do, what a happy place we could make it for each other ! If I were able to do what I want ; but then I am not, and may leave that vein.

No. I do not think I shall require to know the Gaelic ; few things are written in that language, or ever were ; if you come to that, the number of those who could write, or even read it, through almost all my period, must, by all accounts, have been incredibly small. Of course, until the book is done, I must live as much as possible in the Highlands, and that suits my book as to health. It is a most interesting and sad story, and from the '45 it is all to be written for the first time. This, of course, will cause me a far greater difficulty about authorities ; but I have already learned much, and where to look for more. One pleasant feature is the vast number of delightful writers I shall have to deal with : Burt, Johnson, Boswell, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, Scott. There will be interesting sections on the Ossianic controversy and the growth of the taste for Highland scenery. I have to touch upon Rob Roy, Flora Macdonald, the strange story of Lady Grange, the beautiful story of the tenants on the Forfeited Estates, and the odd, inhuman problem of the great evictions. The religious conditions are wild, unknown, very surprising. And three out of my five parts remain hitherto entirely unwritten. Smack !—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Davos, Dec. 26th, 1880*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I was very tired yesterday and could not write ; I tobogganed so furiously all morning ; we had a delightful day, crowned by an incredible dinner—more courses than I have fingers on my hands. Your letter arrived duly at night, and I thank you for it as I should. You need not suppose I am at all insensible to my father's extraordinary kindness about this book ; he is a brick ; I

vote for him freely. The assurance you speak of is what we all ought to have, and might have, and should not consent to live without. That people do not have it more than they do is, I believe, because parsons speak so much in long-drawn, theological similitudes, and won't say out what they mean about life, and man, and God, in fair and square human language. I wonder if you or my father ever thought of the obscurities that lie upon human duty from the negative form in which the ten commandments are stated ; or of how Christ was so continually substituting affirmatives. "Thou shalt not" is but an example : "Thou shalt" is the law of God. It was this that seems meant in the phrase that "not one jot or tittle of the law should pass." But what led me to the remark is this : A kind of black angry look goes with that statement of the law in negatives. "To love one's neighbour as oneself" is certainly much harder, but states life so much more actively, gladly, and kindly, that you can begin to see some pleasure in it ; and till you can see pleasure in these hard choices and bitter necessities, where is there any Good News to men ? It is much more important to do right than not to do wrong ; further, the one is possible, the other has always been and will ever be impossible ; and the faithful *desire to do right* is accepted by God : that seems to me to be the gospel, and that was how Christ delivered us from the law. After people are told that surely they might hear more encouraging sermons. To blow the trumpet for good would seem the parson's business ; and since it is not in our own strength, but by faith and perseverance (no account made of slips) that we are to run the race, I do not see where they get the material for their gloomy discourses. Faith is, not to believe the Bible, but to believe in God ; if you believe in God (or, for it's the same thing, have that assurance you speak about) where is there any more room for terror ? There are only three possible attitudes : Optimism, which has gone to smash : Pessimism, which is on the rising hand and very popular among clergymen who seem to think they are Christians—Lily, I daresay, for instance ; and this Faith, which is the gospel. Once you



hold the last ; it is your business (1) to find out what is right and (2) to try to do it ; if you fail in the last, that is by commission, Christ tells you to hope ; if you fail in the first, that is, by omission, his picture of the last day gives you but a black lookout. The whole necessary morality is kindness ; and it should spring of itself, from the one fundamental doctrine, faith. If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness by you, you should be happy ; and if happy surely you should be kind.

I beg your pardon for this long discourse ; it is not all right, of course, but I am sure there is something in it. One thing I have not got clearly : that about the omission and the commission ; but there is truth somewhere about it, and I have no time to try to clear it just now. Do you know, you have had about a *Cornhill* page of sermon ? it is, however, true.

Lloyd heard with dismay Fanny was not going to give me a present ; so F. and I had to go and buy things for ourselves and go through a representation of surprise when they were presented next morning. It gave us both quite a Santa Claus feeling on Xmas eve to see him so excited and hopeful ; I enjoyed it hugely.

I believe I have only been twice away before on Xmas ; once last year, over which I draw a veil ; and once in '65, I think, when I spent the day reading old magazines in a deserted Savile Club, and dined at night at Simpson's with a French novel ; I had a heavy cold, I remember, and was not precisely merry. This time it was very different. I am glad it comforts you to know me to be with my wife. I cannot tell you what a change it is to me ; may God bless her, and spare us long in love to each other. I send you both my most affectionate love, except what I keep for my wife, and remain

Your afft. son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I did go out to Davos after all in January, and found Stevenson apparently little improved in health, and depressed by a sad turn of destiny which had brought out his old friend and inspirer Mrs. Sitwell to the same place, at the same time, to watch beside the deathbed of her son—the youth commemorated in the verses headed *F. A. S., In Memoriam*, afterwards published in *Underwoods*. The following letter refers to a copy of Carlyle's *Reminiscences* which I had sent him some time after I came back to England.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [Spring, 1881]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—My health is not just what it should be ; I have lost weight, pulse, respiration, etc., and gained nothing in the way of my old bellows. But these last few days, with tonic, cod-liver oil, better wine (there is some better now), and perpetual beef-tea, I think I have progressed. To say truth, I have been here a little over long. I was reckoning up, and since I have known you, already quite a while, I have not, I believe, remained so long in any one place as here in Davos. That tells on my old gipsy nature ; like a violin hung up, I begin to lose what music there was in me ; and with the music, I do not know what besides, or do not know what to call it, but something radically part of life, a rhythm, perhaps, in one's old and so brutally over-ridden nerves, or perhaps a kind of variety of blood that the heart has come to look for.

I purposely knocked myself off first. As to F. A. S., I believe I am no sound authority ; I alternate between a stiff disregard and a kind of horror. In neither mood can a man judge at all. I know the thing to be terribly perilous, I fear it to be now altogether hopeless. Luck has failed ; the weather has not been favourable ; and in her true heart, the mother hopes no more. But—well, I feel a great deal, that I either cannot or will not say, as you well know. It has helped to make me more conscious of the wolverine on my own shoulders, and that also makes me a poor judge and poor adviser. Perhaps, if we were all marched out in a row, and a piece of platoon firing to the drums performed, it would be well for us ; although, I suppose—and yet I



wonder!—so ill for the poor mother and for the dear wife. But you can see this makes me morbid. *Sufficit ; explicit.*

You are right about the Carlyle book ; F. and I are in a world not ours ; but pardon me, as far as sending on goes, we take another view : the first volume, *à la bonne heure !* but not—never—the second. Two hours of hysterics can be no good matter for a sick nurse, and the strange, hard, old being in so lamentable and yet human a desolation—crying out like a burnt child, and yet always wisely and beautifully—how can that end, as a piece of reading, even to the strong—but on the brink of the most cruel kind of weeping ? I observe the old man's style is stronger on me than ever it was, and by rights, too, since I have just laid down his most attaching book. God rest the baith o' them ! But even if they do not meet again, how we should all be strengthened to be kind, and not only in act, in speech also, that so much more important part. See what this apostle of silence most regrets, not speaking out his heart.

I was struck as you were by the admirable, sudden, clear sunshine upon Southey—even on his works. Symonds, to whom I repeated it, remarked at once, a man who was thus respected by both Carlyle and Landor must have had more in him than we can trace. So I feel with true humility.

It was to save my brain that Symonds proposed reviewing. He and, it appears, Leslie Stephen fear a little some eclipse : I am not quite without sharing the fear. I know my own languor as no one else does ; it is a dead down-draught, a heavy fardel. Yet if I could shake off the wolverine afore-said, and his fangs are lighter, though perhaps I feel them more, I believe I could be myself again a while. I have not written any letter for a great time ; none saying what I feel, since you were here, I fancy. Be duly obliged for it, and take my most earnest thanks not only for the books but for your letter.—Your affectionate,

R. L. S.

The effect of reading this on Fanny shows me I must tell you I am very happy, peaceful, and jolly, except for questions of work and the states of other people.

Woggin sends his love.

## TO HORATIO F. BROWN

A close intimate of J. A. Symonds, and frequent visitor at Davos, was Mr. Horatio F. Brown, author of *Life on the Lagoons*, etc. He took warmly, as did every one, to Stevenson. The following two notes are from a copy of Penn's *Fruits of Solitude*, printed at Philadelphia, which Stevenson sent him as a gift this winter after his return to Venice.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [February, 1881]*

MY DEAR BROWN,—Here it is, with the mark of a San Francisco *bouquiniste*. And if ever in all my "human conduct" I have done a better thing to any fellow-creature than handing on to you this sweet, dignified, and wholesome book, I know I shall hear of it on the last day. To write a book like this were impossible; at least one can hand it on—with a wrench—one to another. My wife cries out and my own heart misgives me, but still here it is. I could scarcely better prove myself.—Yours affectionately,  
R. L. STEVENSON.

## TO HORATIO F. BROWN

*[Hotel Belvedere, Davos, February, 1881]*

MY DEAR BROWN,—I hope, if you get thus far, you will know what an invaluable present I have made you. Even the copy was dear to me, printed in the colony that Penn established, and carried in my pocket all about the San Francisco streets, read in street cars and ferry-boats, when I was sick unto death, and found in all times and places a peaceful and sweet companion. But I hope, when you shall have reached this note, my gift will not have been in vain; for while just now we are so busy and intelligent, there is not the man living, no, nor recently dead, that could put, with so lovely a spirit, so much honest, kind wisdom into words.

R. L. S.



## TO HORATIO F. BROWN

The following experiment in English alcaics was suggested by conversations with Mr. Brown and J. A. Symonds on metrical forms, followed by the despatch of some translations from old Venetian boat-songs by the former after his return to Venice.

*Hotel Belvedere, Davos [April, 1881]*

MY DEAR BROWN,—Nine years I have conded them.

Brave lads in olden musical centuries  
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,  
Sat late by alehouse doors in April  
Chaunting in joy as the moon was rising :

Moon-seen and merry, under the trellises,  
Flush-faced they played with old polysyllables ;  
Spring scents inspired,\* old wine diluted ;  
Love and Apollo were there to chorus.

Now these, the songs, remain to eternity,  
Those, only those, the bountiful choristers  
Gone—those are gone, those unremembered  
Sleep and are silent in earth for ever.

So man himself appears and evanishes,  
So smiles and goes ; as wanderers halting at  
Some green-embowered house, play their music,  
Play and are gone on the windy highway ;

Yet dwells the strain enshrined in the memory  
Long after they departed eternally,  
Forth-faring tow'rd far mountain summits,  
Cities of men on the sounding Ocean.

Youth sang the song in years immemorial ;  
Brave chauncicleer, he sang and was beautiful ;  
Bird-haunted, green tree-tops in springtime  
Heard and were pleased by the voice of singing ;

\* *I.e.*, breathed in, inhaled ; a rare but legitimate use of the word.

Youth goes, and leaves behind him a prodigy—  
Songs sent by thee afar from Venetian  
Sea-grey lagunes, sea-paven highways,  
Dear to me here in my Alpine exile.

Please, my dear Brown, forgive my horrid delay. Symonds overworked and knocked up. I off my sleep; my wife gone to Paris. Weather lovely.—Yours ever,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Monte Generoso in May; here, I think, till the end of April; write again, to prove you are forgiving.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Monte Generoso was given up; and on the way home to Scotland Stevenson had stopped for a while at Fontainebleau, and then in Paris; whence, finding himself unpleasantly affected by the climate, he presently took refuge at St. Germain.

*Hotel du Pavillon Henry IV.,  
St. Germain-en-Laye, Sunday, May 1st, 1881*

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—A week in Paris reduced me to the limpness and lack of appetite peculiar to a kid glove, and gave Fanny a jumping sore throat. It's my belief there is death in the kettle there; a pestilence or the like. We came out here, pitched on the *Star and Garter* (they call it Somebody's pavilion), found the place a bed of lilacs and nightingales (first time I ever heard one), and also of a bird called the *piasseur*, cheerfulest of sylvan creatures, an ideal comic opera in itself. "Come along, what fun, here's Pan in the next glade at picnic, and this-yer's Arcadia, and it's awful fun, and I've had a glass, I will not deny, but not to see it on me," that is his meaning as near as I can gather. Well, the place (forest of beeches all new-fledged, grass like velvet, fleets of hyacinth) pleased us and did us good. We tried all ways to find a cheaper place, but could find nothing safe; cold, damp, brick-floored rooms and sich; we could not leave Paris till your seven days' sight on draft expired;



we dared not go back to be miasmatized in these homes of putridity, so here we are till Tuesday in the *Star and Garter*. My throat is quite cured, appetite and strength on the mend. Fanny seems also picking up.

If we are to come to Scotland, I *will* have fir-trees, and I want a burn, the firs for my physical, the water for my moral health.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

At Pitlochry, Stevenson was for some weeks in good health and working order. The inquiries about the later life of Jean Cavalier, the Protestant leader in the Cévennes, refer to a literary scheme, whether of romance or history I forget, which had been in his mind ever since the *Travels with a Donkey*.

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 6, 1881*

MY DEAR WEG,—Here I am in my native land, being gently blown and hailed upon, and sitting nearer and nearer to the fire. A cottage near a moor is soon to receive our human forms; it is also near a burn to which Professor Blackie (no less!) has written some verses in his hot old age, and near a farm from whence we shall draw cream and fatness. Should I be moved to join Blackie, I shall go upon my knees and pray hard against temptation; although, since the new Version, I do not know the proper form of words. The swollen, childish, and pedantic vanity that moved the said revisers to put “bring” for “lead,” is a sort of literary fault that calls for an eternal hell; it may be quite a small place, a star of the least magnitude, and shabbily furnished; there shall —, —, the revisers of the Bible and other absolutely loathsome literary lepers, dwell among broken pens, bad, *groundy* ink and ruled blotting-paper made in France—all eagerly burning to write, and all inflicted with incurable aphasia. I should not have thought upon that torture had I not suffered it in moderation myself, but it is too horrid even for a hell; let’s let ’em off with an eternal toothache.

All this talk is partly to persuade you that I write to you

out of good feeling only, which is not the case. I am a beggar : ask Dobson, Saintsbury, yourself, and any other of these cheeses who know something of the eighteenth century, what became of Jean Cavalier between his coming to England and his death in 1740. Is anything interesting known about him ? Whom did he marry ? The happy French, smilingly following one another in a long procession headed by the loud and empty Napoleon Peyrat, say, Olympe Dunoyer, Voltaire's old flame. Vacquerie even thinks that they were rivals, and is very French and very literary and very silly in his comments. Now I may almost say it consists with my knowledge that all this has not a shadow to rest upon. It is very odd and very annoying ; I have splendid materials for Cavalier till he comes to my own country ; and there, though he continues to advance in the service, he becomes entirely invisible to me. Any information about him will be greatly welcome : I may mention that I know as much as I desire about the other prophets, Marion, Fage, Cavalier (de Sonne), my Cavalier's cousin, the unhappy Lions, and the idiotic Mr. Lacy ; so if any erudite starts upon that track, you may choke him off. If you can find aught for me, or if you will but try, count on my undying gratitude. Lang's " Library " is very pleasant reading. My book *will* reach you soon, for I write about it to-day.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO PROFESSOR GEORGE SAINTSBURY

[? *Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June, 1881*]

MY DEAR SAINTSBURY,—Thanks for yours. Why did I call Lockhart a cad ? That calls for an answer, and I give it. " Scorpion " literature seems at the best no very fit employment for a man of genius, which Lockhart was—and none at all for a gentleman. But if a man goes in for such a trade, he must be ready for the consequences ; and I do not conceive a gentleman as a coward ; the white feather is



not his crest, it *almost* excludes—and I put the “almost” with reluctance. Well, now about the duel? Even Bel-Ami turned up on the *terrain*. But Lockhart? *Et responsum est ab omnibus. Non est inventus*. I have often wondered how Scott took that episode. I do not know how this view will strike you; but it seems to me the “good old honest” fashion of our fathers, though I own it does not agree with the New Morality. “Cad” may be perhaps an expression too vivacious and not well chosen; it is, at least upon my view, substantially just.

Now if you mean to comb my wig, comb it from the right parting—I know you will comb it well.

An infinitely small jest occurs to me in connection with the historic umbrella: and perhaps its infinite smallness attracts me. Would you mind handing it to Rudyard Kipling with the enclosed note? It seems to me fitly to consecrate and commemorate this most absurd episode.

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

(Enclosure)

This Umbrella  
purchased in the year 1878 by  
Robert Louis Stevenson  
(and faithfully stabled for more than twenty years in the halls  
of George Saintsbury)  
is now handed on at the suggestion of the first and by the loyal  
hands of the second  
to  
Rudyard Kipling.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Work on a series of tales of terror, or, as he called them, “crawlers,” planned in collaboration with his wife, soon superseded for the moment other literary interests in Stevenson’s mind. *Thrawn Janet* and the *Body-Snatcher* were the only two of the set completed under their original titles: *The Wreck of the “Susanna”* contained, I think, the germs of *The Merry Men*.

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [June, 1881]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—*The Black Man and Other Tales.*

The Black Man :

I. Thrawn Janet.

II. The Devil on Cramond Sands.

The Shadow on the Bed.

The Body-Snatchers.

The Case Bottle.

The King's Horn.

The Actor's Wife.

The Wreck of the *Susanna*.

This is the new work on which I am engaged with Fanny ; they are all supernatural. *Thrawn Janet* is off to Stephen, but as it is all in Scotch he cannot take it, I know. It was *so good*, I could not help sending it. My health improves. We have a lovely spot here : a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots ; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben Vrackie. Hunger lives here, alone with larks and sheep. Sweet spot, sweet spot.

Write me a word about Bob's professoriate and Landor, and what you think of *The Black Man*. The tales are all ghastly. *Thrawn Janet* frightened me to death. There will maybe be another—*The Dead Man's Letter*. I believe I shall recover ; and I am, in this blessed hope, yours exuberantly,

R. L. S.

TO PROFESSOR ÆNEAS MACKAY

This and the next four or five letters refer to the candidature of R. L. S. for the Edinburgh Chair.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry,  
Wednesday, June 21, 1881

MY DEAR MACKAY,—What is this I hear?—that you are retiring from your chair. It is not, I hope, from ill-health?



But if you are retiring, may I ask if you have promised your support to any successor? I have a great mind to try. The summer session would suit me; the chair would suit me—if only I would suit it; I certainly should work it hard: that I can promise. I only wish it were a few years from now, when I hope to have something more substantial to show for myself. Up to the present time, all that I have published, even bordering on history, has been in an occasional form, and I fear this is much against me.

Please let me hear a word in answer, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO PROFESSOR ÆNEAS MACKAY

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [June, 1881]*

MY DEAR MACKAY,—Thank you very much for your kind letter, and still more for your good opinion. You are not the only one who has regretted my absence from your lectures; but you were to me, then, only a part of a mangle through which I was being slowly and unwillingly dragged—part of a course which I had not chosen—part, in a word, of an organised boredom.

I am glad to have your reasons for giving up the chair; they are partly pleasant, and partly honourable to you. And I think one may say that every man who publicly declines a plurality of offices, makes it perceptibly more difficult for the next man to accept them.

Every one tells me that I come too late upon the field, every one being pledged, which, seeing it is yet too early for any one to come upon the field, I must regard as a polite evasion. Yet all advise me to stand, as it might serve me against the next vacancy. So stand I shall, unless things are changed. As it is, with my health this summer class is a great attraction; it is perhaps the only hope I may have of a permanent income. I had supposed the needs of the chair might be met by choosing every year some period of

history in which questions of Constitutional Law were involved ; but this is to look too far forward.

I understand (1st) that no overt steps can be taken till your resignation is accepted ; and (2nd) that in the meantime I may, without offence, mention my design to stand.

If I am mistaken about these, please correct me, as I do not wish to appear where I should not.

Again thanking you very heartily for your coals of fire I remain yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [June, 1881]*

MY DEAR S. C.,—Great and glorious news. Your friend, the bold unfearing chap, Aims at a professorial cap, And now besieges, do and dare, The Edinburgh History chair. Three months in summer only it Will bind him to that windy bit ; The other nine to range abroad, Untrammel'd in the eye of God. Mark in particular one thing : He means to work that cursèd thing, And to the golden youth explain Scotland and England, France and Spain.

In short, sir, I mean to try for this chair. I do believe I can make something out of it. It will be a pulpit in a sense ; for I am nothing if not moral, as you know. My works are unfortunately so light and trifling they may interfere. But if you think, as I think, I am fit to fight it, send me the best kind of testimonial stating all you can in favour of me and, with your best art, turning the difficulty of my never having done anything in history, strictly speaking. Second, is there anybody else, think you, from whom I could wring one—I mean, you could wring one for me ? Any party in London or Cambridge who thinks well enough of my little books to back me up with a few heartfelt words ? Jenkin approves highly ; but says, pile in *English* testimonials. Now I only know Stephen, Symonds, Lang, Gosse and you, and Meredith, to be sure. The chair is in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates, where



I believe I am more wondered at than loved. I do not know the foundation; one or two hundred, I suppose. But it would be a good thing for me, out and out good. Help me to live, help me to *work*, for I am the better of pressure, and help me to say what I want about God, man, and life.

R. L. S.

Heart-broken trying to write rightly to people.  
History and Constitutional Law is the full style.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 24, 1881*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I wonder if I misdirected my last to you. I begin to fear it. I hope, however, this will go right. I am in act to do a mad thing—to stand for the Edinburgh Chair of History; it is elected for by the advocates, *quorum pars*; I am told that I am too late this year; but advised on all hands to go on, as it is likely soon to be once more vacant; and I shall have done myself good for the next time. Now, if I got the thing (which I cannot, it appears), I believe, in spite of all my imperfections, I could be decently effectual. If you can think so also, do put it in a testimonial.

Heavens! *Je me sauve*, I have something else to say to you, but after that (which is not a joke) I shall keep it for another shoot.—Yours testimonially,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I surely need not add, dear lad, that if you don't feel like it, you will only have to pacify me by a long letter on general subjects, when I shall hasten to respond in recompense for my assault upon the postal highway.

### TO CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

The next two letters are addressed to an old friend and fellow-member of the Speculative Society, who had passed Advocate six

years before, on the same day as R. L. S. himself, and rose to be Lord Guthrie, a Senator of the Scottish Courts of Justice, and owned Swanston Cottage, sacred to the memory of R. L. S., for his summer home.

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 30, 1881*

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—I propose to myself to stand for Mackay's chair. I can promise that I will not spare to work. If you can see your way to help me, I shall be glad ; and you may at least not mind making my candidature known.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July 2nd, 1881*

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—Many thanks for your support, and many more for the kindness and thoughtfulness of your letter. I shall take your advice in both directions ; presuming that by " electors " you mean the curators. I must see to this soon ; and I feel it would also do no harm to look in at the P. H. \* As soon then as I get through with a piece of work that both sits upon me like a stone and attracts me like a piece of travel, I shall come to town and go a-visiting. Testimonial-hunting is a queer form of sport—but has its pleasures.

If I got that chair, the Spec.† would have a warm defender near at hand ! The sight of your fist made me Speculative on the past.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [July, 1881]*

MY DEAR WEG,—Many thanks for the testimonial ; many thanks for your blind, wondering letter ; many wishes, lastly, for your swift recovery. Insomnia is the

\* Parliament House.

† Speculative Society.



opposite pole from my complaint ; which brings with it a nervous lethargy, an unkind, unwholesome, and ungentle somnolence, fruitful in heavy heads and heavy eyes at morning. You cannot sleep ; well, I can best explain my state thus : I cannot wake. Sleep, like the lees of a posset, lingers all day, lead-heavy, in my knees and ankles. Weight on the shoulders, torpor on the brain. And there is more than too much of that from an ungrateful hound who is now enjoying his first decently competent and peaceful weeks for close upon two years ; happy in a big brown moor behind him, and an incomparable burn by his side ; happy, above all, in some work—for at last I am at work with that appetite and confidence that alone makes work supportable.

I told you I had something else to say. I am very tedious—it is another request. In August and a good part of September we shall be in Braemar, in a house with some accommodation. Now Braemar is a place patronised by the royalty of the Sister Kingdoms—Victoria and the Cairngorms, sir, honouring that countryside by their conjunct presence. This seems to me the spot for A Bard. Now can you come to see us for a little while ? I can promise you, you must like my father, because you are a human being ; you ought to like Braemar, because of your avocation ; and you ought to like me, because I like you ; and again, you must like my wife, because she likes cats ; and as for my mother—well, come and see, what do you think ? that is best. Mrs. Gosse, my wife tells me, will have other fish to fry ; and to be plain, I should not like to ask her till I had seen the house. But a lone man I know we shall be equal to. *Qu'en dis tu ? Viens.*—Yours,  
R. L. S.

TO P. G. HAMERTON

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [July, 1881]*

MY DEAR MR. HAMERTON,—(There goes the second M. ; it is a certainty.) Thank you for your prompt and

kind answer, little as I deserved it, though I hope to show you I was less undeserving than I seemed. But just might I delete two words in your testimonial? The two words "and legal" were unfortunately winged by chance against my weakest spot, and would go far to damn me.

It was not my bliss that I was interested in when I was married; it was a sort of marriage *in extremis*; and if I am where I am, it is thanks to the care of that lady who married me when I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom.

I had a fair experience of that kind of illness when all the women (God bless them!) turn round upon the streets and look after you with a look that is only too kind not to be cruel. I have had nearly two years of more or less prostration. I have done no work whatever since the February before last until quite of late. To be precise, until the beginning of last month, exactly two essays. All last winter I was at Davos; and indeed I am home here just now against the doctor's orders, and must soon be back again to that unkindly haunt "upon the mountains visitant"—there goes no angel there but the angel of death.\* The deaths of last winter are still sore spots to me. . . . So, you see, I am not very likely to go on a "wild expedition," *cis-Stygian* at least. The truth is, I am scarce justified in standing for the chair, though I hope you will not mention this; and yet my health is one of my reasons, for the class is in summer.

I hope this statement of my case will make my long neglect appear less unkind. It was certainly not because I ever forgot you, or your unwonted kindness; and it was not because I was in any sense rioting in pleasures.

I am glad to hear the catamaran is on her legs again; you have my warmest wishes for a good cruise down the Saône; and yet there comes some envy to that wish, for when shall I go cruising? Here a sheer hulk, alas! lies R. L. S. But I will continue to hope for a better time,

\* "He knew the rocks where angels haunt,  
Upon the mountains visitant."

—Wordsworth's *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*.



canoes that will sail better to the wind, and a river grander than the Saône.

I heard, by the way, in a letter of counsel from a well-wisher, one reason of my town's absurdity about the chair of Art : \* I fear it is characteristic of her manners. It was because you did not call upon the electors !

Will you remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son ?—And believe me, etc., etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [July, 1881]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I do believe I am better, mind and body ; I am tired just now, for I have just been up the burn with Wogg, daily growing better and boo'f'ler ; so do not judge my state by my style in this. I am working steady, four *Cornhill* pages scrolled every day, besides the correspondence about this chair, which is heavy in itself. My first story, *Thrawn Janet*, all in Scotch, is accepted by Stephen ; my second, *The Body-Snatchers*, is laid aside in a justifiable disgust, the tale being horrid ; my third, *The Merry Men*, I am more than half through, and think real well of. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea and wrecks ; and I like it much above all my other attempts at story-telling ; I think it is strange ; if ever I shall make a hit, I have the line now, as I believe.

Fanny has finished one of hers, *The Shadow on the Bed*, and is now hammering at a second, for which we have "no name" as yet—not by Wilkie Collins.

*Tales for Winter Nights*. Yes, that, I think, we will call the lot of them when republished.

Why have you not sent me a testimonial ? Everybody else has responded, and Symonds, but I'm afraid he's ill. Do think, too, if anybody else would write me a testimonial. I am told quantity goes far. I have good

\* Mr Hamerton had been an unsuccessful candidate for the Professorship of Fine Art at Edinburgh University.

ones from Rev. Professor Campbell, Professor Meiklejohn, Leslie Stephen, Lang, Gosse, and a very shaky one from Hamerton.

Grant is an elector, so can't, but has written me kindly. From Tulloch I have not yet heard. Do help me with suggestions. This old chair, with its £250 and its light work, would make me.

It looks as if we should take Cater's chalet \* after all ; but O ! to go back to that place, it seems cruel. I have not yet received the Landor ; but it may be at home, detained by my mother, who returns to-morrow.

Believe me, dear Colvin, ever yours,

R. L. S.

Yours came ; the class is in summer ; many thanks for the testimonial, it is bully ; arrived along with it another from Symonds, also bully ; he is ill, but not lungs, thank God—fever got in Italy. We *have* taken Cater's chalet ; so we are now the aristo.'s of the valley. There is no hope for me, but if there were, you would hear sweetness and light streaming from my lips.

### *The Merry Men*

Chap. I. Eilean Aros.

II. What the Wreck had  
brought to Aros.

III. Past and Present in  
Sandag Bay.

IV. The Gale.

V. A Man out of the Sea.

Tip  
Top  
Tale.

TO W. E. HENLEY

*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July, 1881*

MY DEAR HENLEY,—I hope, then, to have a visit from you. If before August, here ; if later, at Braemar. Tupe !

And now, *mon bon*, I must babble about *The Merry Men*, my favourite work. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea

\* The Chalet am Stein (or Chalet Buol) at Davos.



and wrecks. Chapter I. "Eilean Aros"—the island, the roost, the "merry men," the three people there living—sea superstitions. Chapter II "What the Wreck had brought to Aros." Eh, boy? what had it? Silver and clocks and brocades, and what a conscience, what a mad brain! Chapter III. "Past and Present in Sandag Bay"—the new wreck and the old—so old—the Armada treasure-ship, Sant<sup>ma</sup> Trini<sup>a</sup>—the grave in the heather—strangers there. Chapter IV. "The Gale"—the doomed ship—the storm—the drunken madman on the head—cries in the night. Chapter V. "A Man out of the Sea." But I must not breathe to you my plot. It is, I fancy, my first real shoot at a story; an odd thing, sir, but, I believe, my own, though there is a little of Scott's *Pirate* in it, as how should there not? He had the root of romance in such places. Aros is Earraid, where I lived lang syne\*; the Ross of Grisapol is the Ross of Mull; Ben Ryan, Ben More. I have written to the middle of Chapter IV. Like enough, when it is finished I shall discard all chapterings; for the thing is written straight through. It must, unhappily, be re-written—too well written not to be.

The chair is only three months in summer; that is why I try for it. If I get it, which I shall not, I should be independent at once. Sweet thought. I liked your Byron well; your Berlioz better. No one would remark these cuts; even I, who was looking for it, knew it not at all to be a torso. The paper strengthens me in my recommendation to you to follow Colvin's hint. Give us an 1830; you will do it well, and the subject smiles widely on the world:—

1830: *A Chapter of Artistic History*, by William Ernest Henley (or of *Social and Artistic History*, as the thing might grow to you). Sir, you might be in the Athenæum yet with that; and, believe me, you might and would be far better, the author of a readable book.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The following names have been invented for Wogg by his dear papa:—

\* In the summer of 1870: see above; vol. I. of *Letters*, pp. 29-35, and the essay, *Memoirs of an Islet* in *Memories and Portraits*.

Grunty-pig (when he is scratched),  
 Rose-mouth (when he comes flying up with his rose-leaf  
 tongue depending), and  
 Hoofen-boots (when he has had his foots wet).  
 How would *Tales for Winter Nights* do?

### TO W. E. HENLEY

The spell of good health did not last long, and with a break of the weather came a return of catarrhal troubles and hemorrhage. This letter answers some criticisms made by his correspondent on *The Merry Men* as drafted in MS.

*Pitlochry, if you please [August] 1881*

DEAR HENLEY,—To answer a point or two. First, the Spanish ship was sloop-rigged and clumsy, because she was fitted out by some private adventurers, not over wealthy, and glad to take what they could get. Is that not right? Tell me if you think not. That, at least, was how I meant it. As for the boat-cloaks, I am afraid they are, as you say, false imagination; but I love the name, nature, and being of them so dearly, that I feel as if I would almost rather ruin a story than omit the reference. The proudest moments of my life have been passed in the stern-sheets of a boat with that romantic garment over my shoulders. This, without prejudice to one glorious day when standing upon some water stairs at Lerwick I signalled with my pocket-handkerchief for a boat to come ashore for me. I was then aged fifteen or sixteen; conceive my glory.

Several of the phrases you object to are proper nautical, or long-shore phrases, and therefore, I think, not out of place in this long-shore story. As for the two members which you thought at first so ill-united; I confess they seem perfectly so to me. I have chosen to sacrifice a long-projected story of adventure because the sentiment of that is identical with the sentiment of "My uncle." My uncle himself is not the story as I see it, only the leading episode of that story. It's really a story of wrecks, as they appear to the dweller on the coast. It's a view of the sea.



Goodness knows when I shall be able to re-write ; I must first get over this copper-headed cold.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The reference to Landor in the following is to a volume of mine in Mr. Morley's series of *English Men of Letters*. This and the next two or three years were those of the Fenian dynamite outrages at Clerkenwell Prison, the Tower of London, the House of Lords, etc.

[*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, August, 1881*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is the first letter I have written this good while. I have had a brutal cold, not perhaps very wisely treated ; lots of blood—for me, I mean. I was so well, however, before, that I seem to be sailing through with it splendidly. My appetite never failed ; indeed, as I got worse, it sharpened—a sort of reparatory instinct. Now I feel in a fair way to get round soon.

*Monday, August (2nd, is it ?).*—We set out for the Spital of Glenshee, and reach Braemar on Tuesday. The Braemar address we cannot learn ; it looks as if “ Braemar ” were all that was necessary ; if particular, you can address 17 Heriot Row. We shall be delighted to see you whenever, and as soon as ever, you can make it possible.

. . . I hope heartily you will survive me, and do not doubt it. There are seven or eight people it is no part of my scheme in life to survive—yet if I could but heal me of my bellowses, I could have a jolly life—have it, even now, when I can work and stroll a little, as I have been doing till this cold. I have so many things to make life sweet to me, it seems a pity I cannot have that other one thing—health. But though you will be angry to hear it, I believe, for myself at least, what is best. I believed it all through my worst days, and I am not ashamed to profess it now.

Landor has just turned up ; but I had read him already. I like him extremely ; I wonder if the “ cuts ” were perhaps not advantageous. It seems quite full enough ; but then you know I am a compressionist.

If I am to criticise, it is a little staid ; but the classical is apt to look so. It is in curious contrast to that inexpressive, unplanned wilderness of Forster's ; clear, readable, precise, and sufficiently human. I see nothing lost in it, though I could have wished, in my Scotch capacity, a trifle clearer and fuller exposition of his moral attitude, which is not quite clear "from here."

He and his tyrannicide ! I am in a mad fury about these explosions. If that is the new world ! Damn O'Donovan Rossa ; damn him behind and before, above, below, and roundabout ; damn, deracinate, and destroy him, root and branch, self and company, world without end. Amen. I write that for sport if you like, but I will pray in earnest, O Lord, if you cannot convert, kindly delete him !

Stories naturally at halt. Henley has seen one and approves. I believe it to be good myself, even real good. He has also seen and approved one of Fanny's. It will make a good volume. We have now

Thrawn Janet (with Stephen), proof to-day.

The Shadow on the Bed (Fanny's copying).

The Merry Men (scrolled).

The Body-Snatchers (scrolled).

*In germis*

The Travelling Companion.

The Torn Surplice (*not final title*).

Yours ever,

R. L. S.

TO DR. ALEXANDER JAPP

Dr. Japp (known in literature at this date and for some time afterwards under his pseudonym H. A. Page ; later under his own name the biographer of De Quincey) had written to R. L. S. criticising statements of fact and opinion in his essay on Thoreau,



and expressing the hope that they might meet and discuss their differences. In the interval between the last letter and this Stevenson with all his family had moved to Braemar.

*The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar,  
Sunday [August, 1881]*

MY DEAR SIR,—I should long ago have written to thank you for your kind and frank letter ; but in my state of health papers are apt to get mislaid, and your letter has been vainly hunted for until this (Sunday) morning.

I regret I shall not be able to see you in Edinburgh ; one visit to Edinburgh has already cost me too dear in that invaluable particular health ; but if it should be at all possible for you to push on as far as Braemar, I believe you would find an attentive listener, and I can offer you a bed, a drive, and necessary food, etc.

If, however, you should not be able to come thus far, I can promise you two things : First, I shall religiously revise what I have written, and bring out more clearly the point of view from which I regard Thoreau ; second, I shall in the Preface record your objection.

The point of view (and I must ask you not to forget that any such short paper is essentially only a *section through* a man) was this : I desired to look at the man through his books. Thus, for instance, when I mentioned his return to the pencil-making, I did it only in passing (perhaps I was wrong), because it seemed to me not an illustration of his principles, but a brave departure from them. Thousands of such there were I do not doubt ; still, they might be hardly to my purpose, though, as you say so, some of them would be.

Our difference as to pity I suspect was a logomachy of my making. No pitiful acts on his part would surprise me ; I know he would be more pitiful in practice than most of the whiners ; but the spirit of that practice would still seem to be unjustly described by the word pity.

When I try to be measured, I find myself usually suspected of a sneaking unkindness for my subject ; but you may be sure, sir, I would give up most other things to be

so good a man as Thoreau. Even my knowledge of him leads me thus far.

Should you find yourself able to push on to Braemar—it may even be on your way—believe me, your visit will be most welcome. The weather is cruel, but the place is, as I daresay you know, the very “wale” of Scotland—bar Tummelside.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

*The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar*  
[August, 1881]

. . . WELL, I have been pretty mean, but I have not yet got over my cold so completely as to have recovered much energy. It is really extraordinary that I should have recovered as well as I have in this blighting weather; the wind pipes, the rain comes in squalls, great black clouds are continually overhead, and it is as cold as March. The country is delightful, more cannot be said; it is very beautiful, a perfect joy when we get a blink of sun to see it in. The Queen knows a thing or two, I perceive, she has picked out the finest habitable spot in Britain.

I have done no work, and scarce written a letter for three weeks, but I think I should soon begin again; my cough is now very trifling. I eat well, and seem to have lost but little flesh in the meanwhile. I was *wonderfully* well before I caught this horrid cold. I never thought I should have been as well again; I really enjoyed life and work; and, of course, I now have a good hope that this may return.

I suppose you heard of our ghost stories. They are somewhat delayed by my cold and a bad attack of laziness, embroidery, etc., under which Fanny had been some time prostrate. It is horrid that we can get no better weather. I did not get such good accounts of you as might have been. You must imitate me. I am now one of the most conscientious people at trying to get better you ever saw. I have a white hat, it is much admired; also a plaid, and a



heavy stoop ; so I take my walks abroad, witching the world.

Last night I was beaten at chess, and am still grinding under the blow.—Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

*The Cottage (late the late Miss M'Gregor's),  
Castleton of Braemar, August 10, 1881*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Come on the 24th, there is a dear fellow. Everybody else wants to come later, and it will be a godsend for, sir—Yours sincerely.

You can stay as long as you behave decently and are not sick of, sir—Your obedient, humble servant.

We have family worship in the home of, sir—Yours respectfully.

Braemar is a fine country, but nothing to (what you will also see) the maps of, sir—Yours in the Lord.

A carriage and two spanking hacks draw up daily at the hour of two before the house of, sir—Yours truly.

The rain rains and the winds do beat upon the cottage of the late Miss Macgregor and of, sir—Yours affectionately.

It is to be trusted that the weather may improve ere you know the halls of, sir—Yours emphatically.

All will be glad to welcome you, not excepting, sir—Yours ever.

You will now have gathered the lamentable intellectual collapse of, sir—Yours indeed.

And nothing remains for me but to sign myself, sir—Yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

*N.B.*—Each of these clauses has to be read with extreme glibness, coming down whack upon the “Sir.” This is very important. The fine stylistic inspiration will else be lost.

I commit the man who made, the man who sold, and the

woman who supplied me with my present excruciating gilt nib to that place where the worm never dies.

The reference to a deceased Highland lady (tending as it does to foster unavailing sorrow) may be with advantage omitted from the address, which would therefore run—  
The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

*The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar,  
August 19, 1881*

IF you had an uncle who was a sea captain and went to the North Pole, you had better bring his outfit. *Verbum Sapientibus.* I look towards you.

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

*[Braemar, August 19, 1881]*

MY DEAR WEG,—I have by an extraordinary drollery of Fortune sent off to you by this day's post a P.C. inviting you to appear in sealskin. But this had reference to the weather, and not at all, as you may have been led to fancy, to our rustic raiment of an evening.

As to that question, I would deal, in so far as in me lies, fairly with all men. We are not dressy people by nature; but it sometimes occurs to us to entertain angels. In the country, I believe, even angels may be decently welcomed in tweed; I have faced many great personages, for my own part, in a tasteful suit of sea-cloth with an end of carpet pending from my gullet. Still, we do maybe twice a summer burst out in the direction of blacks—and yet we do it seldom. In short, let your own heart decide, and the capacity of your portmanteau. If you came in camel's hair, you would still, although conspicuous, be welcome.

The sooner the better after Tuesday.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

The following records the beginning of work upon *Treasure Island*, the name originally proposed for which was the *Sea Cook*.

[*Braemar, August 25, 1881*]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now, I'm better, I think; and see here—nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers. They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd, this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Story for Boys*.

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about Buccaneers, that it begins in the "Admiral Benbow" public-house on the Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind), and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted, friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Routledge*? That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parent have to be consulted.

And now look here—this is next day—and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I. The Old Sea-dog at the "Admiral Benbow." Chapter II. Black Dog appears

and disappears. Chapter III. The Black Spot.) All now heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It's quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the *best* book about the Buccaneers that can be had—the latter B's above all, Blackbeard and sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you'll write to me, for *The Sea Cook's* sake.

Your Admiral Guinea is curiously near my line, but of course I'm fooling; and your Admiral sounds like a shublime gent. Stick to him like wax—he'll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand sea-miles off the lie of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling. A chapter a day I mean to do; they are short; and perhaps in a month *The Sea Cook* may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! My Trelawney has a strong dash of Landor, as I see him from here. No women in the story, Lloyd's orders; and who so blythe to obey? It's awful fun boys' stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended—that I don't see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils. You would like my blind beggar in Chapter III. I believe; no writing, just drive along as the words come and the pen will scratch!

R. L. S.

Author of Boys' Stories

### TO DR. ALEXANDER JAPP

This correspondent had paid his visit as proposed, discussed the Thoreau differences, listened delightedly to the first chapters of *Treasure Island*, and proposed to offer the story for publication to his friend Mr. Henderson, proprietor and editor of *Young Folks*.

[Braemar, September, 1881]

MY DEAR DR. JAPP,—My father has gone, but I think I may take it upon me to ask you to keep the book. Of all



things you could do to endear yourself to me, you have done the best, for my father and you have taken a fancy to each other.

I do not know how to thank you for all your kind trouble in the matter of *The Sea Cook*, but I am not unmindful. My health is still poorly, and I have added intercostal rheumatism—a new attraction—which sewed me up nearly double for two days, and still gives me a list to starboard—let us be ever nautical!

I do not think with the start I have there will be any difficulty in letting Mr. Henderson go ahead whenever he likes. I will write my story up to its legitimate conclusion; and then we shall be in a position to judge whether a sequel would be desirable, and I would then myself know better about its practicability from the story-teller's point of view.—Yours ever very sincerely,

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

This tells of the further progress of *Treasure Island*, of the price paid for it, and of the modest hopes with which it was launched. "The poet" is Mr. Gosse. The project of a highway story, *Jerry Abershaw*, remained a favourite one with Stevenson, until it was superseded three or four years later by another, that of the *Great North Road*, which in its turn had to be abandoned, from lack of health and leisure, after some six or eight chapters had been written.

*Braemar, September, 1881*

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Thanks for your last. The £100 fell through, or dwindled at least into somewhere about £30. However, that I've taken as a mouthful, so you may look out for *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Tale of the Buccaneers*, in *Young Folks*. (The terms are £2, 10s. a page of 450 words; that's not noble, is it? But I have my copyright safe. I don't get illustrated—a blessing; that's the price I have to pay for my copyright.)

I'll make this boys' book business pay; but I have to make a beginning. When I'm done with *Young Folks*, I'll

try Routledge or some one. I feel pretty sure the *Sea Cook* will do to reprint, and bring something decent at that.

Japp is a good soul. The poet was very gay and pleasant. He told me much : he is simply the most active young man in England, and one of the most intelligent. "He shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend." \* He is now extending over adjacent parts of Scotland.

I propose to follow up *The Sea Cook* at proper intervals by *Jerry Abershaw : A Tale of Putney Heath* (which or its site I must visit), *The Leading Light : A Tale of the Coast*, *The Squaw Men : or the Wild West*, and other instructive and entertaining work. *Jerry Abershaw* should be good, eh? I love writing boys' books. This first is only an experiment : wait till you see what I can make 'em with my hand in. I'll be the Harrison Ainsworth of the future ; and a chalk better by St. Christopher ; or at least as good. You'll see that even by *The Sea Cook*.

Jerry Abershaw—O what a title ! Jerry Abershaw : d—n it, sir, it's a poem. The two most lovely words in English ; and what a sentiment ! Hark you, how the hoofs ring ! Is this a blacksmith's ? No, it's a wayside inn. Jerry Abershaw. "It was a clear, frosty evening, not 100 miles from Putney," etc. Jerry Abershaw. Jerry Abershaw. *The Sea Cook* is now in its sixteenth chapter, and bids for well up in the thirties. Each three chapters is worth £2, 10s. So we've £12, 10s. already.

Don't read Marryat's *Pirate* anyhow ; it is written in sand with a salt-spoon : arid, feeble, vain, tottering production. But then we're not always all there. *He was all* somewhere else that trip. It's *damnable*, Henley. I don't go much on *The Sea Cook* ; but, Lord, it's a little fruitier than the *Pirate* by Cap'n. Marryat.

Since this was written *The Cook* is in his nineteenth chapter. Yo-heave ho !

R. L. S.

\* From Landor's *Gebir* : the line refers to Napoleon Bonaparte.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson's uncle, Dr. George Balfour, had recommended him to wear a specially contrived and hideous respirator for the inhalation of pine-oil.

*Braemar, 1881*

DEAR HENLEY, with a pig's snout on  
I am starting for London,  
Where I likely shall arrive,  
On Saturday, if still alive :  
Perhaps your pirate doctor might  
See me on Sunday ? If all's right,  
I should then lunch with you and with she  
Who's dearer to you than you are to me.  
I shall remain but little time  
In London, as a wretched clime,  
But not so wretched (for none are)  
As that of beastly old Braemar.  
My doctor sends me skipping. I  
Have many facts to meet your eye.  
My pig's snout's now upon my face ;  
And I inhale with fishy grace,  
My gills outflapping right and left,  
*Ol. pin. sylvest.* I am bereft  
Of a great deal of charm by this—  
Not quite the bull's eye for a kiss—  
But like the gnome of olden time  
Or bogey in a pantomime.  
For ladies' love I once was fit,  
But now am rather out of it.  
Where'er I go, revolted curs  
Snap round my military spurs ;  
The children all retire in fits  
And so eam their bellowses to bits.  
Little care : the worst's been done :  
Now let the cold impoverished sun  
Drop frozen from his orbit ; let  
Fury and fire, cold, wind and wet,

And cataclysmal mad reverses  
 Rage through the federate universes ;  
 Let Lawson triumph, cakes and ale,  
 Whisky and hock and claret fail ;—  
 Tobacco, love, and letters perish,  
 With all that any man could cherish :  
 You it may touch, not me. I dwell  
 Too deep already—deep in hell ;  
 And nothing can befall, O damn !  
 To make me uglier than I am.

R. L. S.

This-*yer* refers to an ori-nasal respirator for the inhalation of pine-wood oil, *oleum pini sylvestris*.

## TO THOMAS STEVENSON

With all his throat and lung troubles actively renewed, Stevenson fled to Davos again in October. This time he and his wife and stepson occupied a small house by themselves, the Chalet am Stein, near the Buol Hotel. The election to the Edinburgh Professorship was still pending, and the following note to his father shows that he thought for a moment of giving the electors a specimen of his qualifications in the shape of a magazine article on the Appin murder—a theme afterwards turned to more vital account in the tales of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, October, 1881*]

MY DEAR FATHER,—It occurred to me last night in bed that I could write

The Murder of Red Colin,  
 A Story of the Forfeited Estates.

This I have all that is necessary for, with the following exceptions :—

*Trials of the Sons of Rob Roy with Anecdotes* : Edinburgh, 1818, and

The second volume of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

You might also look in Arnot's *Criminal Trials* up in my room, and see what observations he has on the case (Trial



of James Stewart in Appin for murder of Campbell of Glenure, 1752); if he has none, perhaps you could see—O yes, see if Burton has it in his two vols. of trial stories. I hope he hasn't; but care not; do it over again anyway.

The two named authorities I must see. With these, I could soon pull off this article; and it shall be my first for the electors.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

Some of the habitual readers of *Young Folks* had written objecting to the early instalments of *Treasure Island*, and the editor had come forward in their defence.

*Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd  
Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [Nov. 9, 1881]*

DEAR WEG,—If you are taking *Young Folks*, for God's Sake Twig the editorial style; it is incredible; we are all left panting in the rear; twig, O Twig it. His name is Clinton; I should say the most melodious prosewriter now alive; it's like buttermilk and blacking; it sings and hums away in that last sheet, like a great old kettle full of bilge water. You know; none of us could do it, boy. See No. 571, last page: an article called "Sir Claude the Conqueror," and read it *aloud* in your best rhythmic tones; mon cher, c'est épatant.

Observe in the same number, how Will J. Shannon girds at your poor friend; and how the rhythmic Clinton steps chivalrously forth in his defence. First the Rev. Purcell; then Will J. Shannon: thick fall the barbèd arrows.\*

I wish I could play a game of chess with you.

If I survive, I shall have Clinton to dinner: it is plain I must make hay while the sun shines; I shall not long

\* The Editor's defence was in the following terms:—"That which you condemn is really the best story now appearing in the paper, and the impress of an able writer is stamped on every paragraph of *The Treasure Island*. You will probably share this opinion when you have read a little more of it."

keep a footing in the world of penny writers, or call them obolists. It is a world full of surprises, a romantic world. Weg, I was known there; even I. The obolists, then, sometimes peruse our works. It is only fair; since I so much batten upon theirs. Talking of which, in Heaven's name, get *The Bondage of Brandon* (3 vols.) by Bracebridge Hemming. It's the devil and all for drollery. There is a Superior (sic) of the Jesuits, straight out of Skelt.

And now look here, I had three points: Clinton—disposed of—(2nd) Benj. Franklin—do you want him? (3rd) A radiant notion begot this morning over an atlas: why not, you who know the lingo, give us a good legendary and historical book on Iceland? It would, or should, be as romantic as a book of Scott's; as strange and stirring as a dream. Think on't. My wife screamed with joy at the idea; and the little Lloyd clapped his hands; so I offer you three readers on the spot.

Fanny and I have both been in bed, tended by the hired sick nurse; Lloyd has a broken finger (so he did not clap his hands literally); Wogg has had an abscess in his ear; our servant is a devil.—I am yours ever, with both of our best regards to Mrs. Gosse,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
The Rejected Obolist

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

*Davos Printing Office Managed by Samuel Lloyd  
Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [Nov. 1881]*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I believe I agree with all your statements, except your clinging to *Knox* and your doubt of *Pepys*. I tell you the *Knoxes* are an error; it would be far better to keep them back and work them into a life of *Knox* some day: there is no readable life of him; and these are as dull as *McCrie*. I do not think *Yoshida* should go out, because the facts are interesting and the paper short.

I have, of course, written to Macmillan but I protest.  
All my corrected proofs are lost and I must fall to them



again from *Whitman* onward. I am confined to the house with a very bad cold which puts all to a stand, at a time when I cannot certainly afford delay. I keep up very well ; but yesterday forenoon I never ceased to cough which made me completely useless.

I have written to Whyte, I hope properly : " more than generous " I said, which was within the mark. I agree that they will do me no good. It is an odd list of names Ch. of England, Ch. of Scotland, Free Kirk, Pessimist, radical, tory, certainly I am not a party man.

Clarke, I fear, must have patience. I shall be as quick as I can, but I cannot command health and occasion. I am fairly staggering under things to do, and can get none of them done : but nothing so much as a block of this sort depresses the conscience. Morbid action, I believe ; as long as you advance a little, you should not mind.

This winter I mean to write an article on Burt, Boswell, Mrs. Grant & Scott. O ! I believe there is a book on Benjamin Franklin, by Parton, the author of Voltaire's life. If there is, send it ; if there is not, send me the next best thing : not Bigelow, which I have. Douglas & Foulis will have to ask ; as it will be an American book, I am sure.

Please send my testimonials to

Mrs. Betty Patterson, Clayton, Hendricks County,  
Indiana, U.S.A.  
to Mrs. Nelly VdeG. Sanchez, Monterey, Monterey  
Co., Cal., U.S.A.  
and Mrs. Virgil Williams, Art Association Rooms, Pine  
Street, San Francisco.

Please let us have two or three.

Gosse's address, for my mother is  
29 Delamere Terrace  
London W.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

I have been worse since this was written and I own I quite forgot my letter. To-day, I feel greatly better. Weather shocking.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

This letter speaks of contributions to the *Magazine of Arts* (in these years edited by Mr. Henley) from J. A. Symonds and from R. L. S. himself, "Bunyan" meaning the essay on the cuts in Bagster's edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. A toy press had just been set up in the chalet for the lad Lloyd Osbourne.

*Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd  
Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [Nov., 1881]*

DEAR HENLEY,—I have done better for you than you deserved to hope ; the Venice Medley is withdrawn ; and I have a Monte Oliveto (short) for you, with photographs and sketches. I think you owe luck a candle ; for this no skill could have accomplished without the aid of accident.

How about carving and gilding ? I have nearly killed myself over Bunyan ; and am too tired to finish him to-day, as I might otherwise have done. For his back is broken. For some reason, it proved one of the hardest things I ever tried to write ; perhaps—but no—I have no theory to offer—it went against the spirit. But as I say I girt my loins up and nearly died of it.

In five weeks, six at the latest, I should have a complete proof of *Treasure Island*. It will be from 75 to 80,000 words ; and with anything like half good pictures, it should sell. I suppose I may at least hope for eight pic's ? I aspire after ten or twelve. You had better.

—Two days later.

*Bunyan* skips to-day, pretty bad, always with an official letter. Yours came last night. I had already spotted your Dickens ; very pleasant and true.

My wife is far from well ; quite confined to bed now ; drain poisoning. I keep getting better slowly ; appetite dicky ; but some days I feel and eat well. The weather has been hot and heartless and unDavosy.

I shall give Symonds his note in about an hour from now.

Have done so ; he will write Vesalius and of Botticelli's Dante for you.

Morris's Sigurd is a grrrrreat poem ; that is so. I have cried aloud at this re-reading ; he had fine stuff to go on,



but he has touched it, in places, with the hand of a master. Yes. Regin and Fafnir are incredibly fine.

Love to all.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

### TO P. G. HAMERTON

The volume of republished essays here mentioned is *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. "The silly story of the election" refers again to his correspondent's failure as a candidate for the Edinburgh Chair of Fine Arts.

[Chalet am Stein, Davos, December, 1881]

MY DEAR MR. HAMERTON,—My conscience has long been smiting me, till it became nearly chronic. My excuses, however, are many and not pleasant. Almost immediately after I last wrote to you, I had a hemorreage (I can't spell it), was badly treated by a doctor in the country, and have been a long while picking up—still, in fact, have much to desire on that side. Next, as soon as I got here, my wife took ill; she is, I fear, seriously so; and this combination of two invalids very much depresses both.

I have a volume of republished essays coming out with Chatto and Windus; I wish they would come, that my wife might have the reviews to divert her. Otherwise my news is *nil*. I am up here in a little chalet, on the borders of a pine-wood, overlooking a great part of the Davos Thal, a beautiful scene at night, with the moon upon the snowy mountains, and the lights warmly shining in the village. J. A. Symonds is next door to me, just at the foot of my Hill Difficulty (this you will please regard as the House Beautiful), and his society is my great stand-by.

Did you see I had joined the band of the rejected? "Hardly one of us," said my *confrères* at the bar.

I was blamed by a common friend for asking you to give me a testimonial; in the circumstances he thought it was indelicate. Lest, by some calamity, you should ever have felt the same way, I must say in two words how the matter appeared to me. That silly story of the election

altered in no tittle the value of your testimony : so much for that. On the other hand, it led me to take quite a particular pleasure in asking you to give it : and so much for the other. I trust, even if you cannot share it, you will understand my view.

I am in treaty with Bentley for a life of Hazlitt : I hope it will not fall through, as I love the subject, and appear to have found a publisher who loves it also. That, I think, makes things more pleasant. You know I am a fervent Hazlittite ; I mean regarding him as *the* English writer who has had the scantiest justice. Besides which, I am anxious to write biography ; really, if I understand myself in quest of profit, I think it must be good to live with another man from birth to death. You have tried it, and know.

How has the cruising gone ? Pray remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

The memory here evoked of Brash the publican, who had been a special butt for some of the youthful pranks of R. L. S. and his friends, inspired in the next few weeks the sets of verses mentioned below, in letters which show that the fictitious Johnson and Thomson were far from being dead.

[*Chalet am Stein*], Davos, December 5, 1881

MY DEAR CHARLES,—We have been in miserable case here ; my wife worse and worse : and now sent away with Lloyd for sick nurse, I not being allowed to go down. I do not know what is to become of us ; and you may imagine how rotten I have been feeling, and feel now, alone with my weasel-dog and my German maid, on the top of a hill here, heavy mist and thin snow all about me, and the devil to pay in general. I don't care so much for solitude as I used to ; results, I suppose, of marriage.

Pray write me something cheery. A little Edinburgh



gossip, in Heaven's name. Ah ! what would I not give to steal this evening with you through the big, echoing, college archway, and away south under the street lamps, and away to dear Brash's, now defunct ! But the old time is dead also, never, never to revive. It was a sad time too, but so gay and so hopeful, and we had such sport with all our low spirits and all our distresses, that it looks like a kind of lamp-lit fairyland behind me. O for ten Edinburgh minutes—sixpence between us, and the ever-glorious Lothian Road, or dear mysterious Leith Walk ! But here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling ; here in this strange place, whose very strangeness would have been heaven to him then ; and aspires, yes, C. B., with tears, after the past. See what comes of being left alone. Do you remember Brash ? the sheet of glass that we followed along George Street ? Granton ? the night at Bonny mainhead ? the compass near the sign of the *Twinkling Eye* ? the night I lay on the pavement in misery ?

I swear it by the eternal sky  
Johnson—nor—Thomson ne'er shall die !

Yet I fancy they are dead too ; dead like Brash.

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The next is after going down to meet his wife and stepson, when the former had left the doctor's hands at Berne.

*Chalet Buol, Davos-Platz, December 26, 1881*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Yesterday, Sunday and Christmas, we finished this eventful journey by a drive in an *open* sleigh—none others were to be had—seven hours on end through whole forests of Christmas trees. The cold was beyond belief. I have often suffered less at a dentist's. It was a clear, sunny day, but the sun even at noon falls, at this season, only here and there into the Prättigau. I kept up as long as I could in an imitation of a street singer :—

“ Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses,” etc.

At last Lloyd remarked, a blue mouth speaking from a corpse-coloured face, "You seem to be the only one with any courage left!" And, do you know, with that word my courage disappeared, and I made the rest of the stage in the same dumb wretchedness as the others. My only terror was lest Fanny should ask for brandy, or laudanum, or something. So awful was the idea of putting my hands out, that I half thought I would refuse.

Well, none of us are a penny the worse, Lloyd's cold better; I, with a twinge of the rheumatiz; and Fanny better than her ordinary.

General conclusion between Lloyd and me as to the journey: A prolonged visit to the dentist's, complicated with the fear of death.

Never, O never, do you get me there again.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

Mr. Gosse and R. L. S. had proposed to Mr. R. W. Gilder of the *Century Magazine* that they should collaborate for him on a series of murder papers, beginning with the Elstree murder; and he had accepted the proposal on terms which they thought liberal.

*Hotel Buol, Davos, Dec. 26th, 1881*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have just brought my wife back, through such cold, in an open sleigh too, as I had never fancied to exist. I won't use the word torture, but go to your dentist's and in nine cases out of ten you will not suffer more pain than we suffered.

This is merely in acknowledgment of your editorial: to say that I shall give my mind at once to the Murder. But I bethink me you can say so much and convey my sense of the liberality of our Cousins, without exhibiting this scrawl. So I may go on to tell you that I have at last found a publisher as eager to publish, as I am to write a Hazlitt. Bentley is the Boy; and very liberal, at least, as per last advices; certainly very friendly and eager, which makes



work light, like whistling. I wish I was with the rest of—well, of us—in the red books. But I am glad to get a whack at Hazlitt, howsoe'er.

How goes your *Gray*? I would not change with you; brother! Gray would never be suited to my temperament, while Hazlitt fits me like a glove.

I hope in your studies in *Young Folks* you did not miss the delicious reticences, the artistic concealments, and general fine-shade graduation, through which the fact of the Xmas Nr. being 3d. was instilled—too strong—inspired into the mind of the readers. It was superb.

I may add as a postscript: I wish to God I or anybody knew what was the matter with my wife.—Yours ever,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. SITWELL

[*Hotel Buol, Davos, 1882*]

My dear, thank you for your letter. I am in the blackness of low spirits to-night, for Fanny has had a sharp relapse, and I have hurt my dog, and bust my own knee. We have been both in bed again for near a week; but I am up, though wretched. I will not write much more, for I should fear to say what I really felt. Mrs. D. is condemned; poor little D. out here again, so wretched: Symonds' oldest daughter ill; his wife and he both wild in consequence. I write out of a dark cloud. But though I have no pleasant news to give you, and little spirit to write at all, I wished only to tell you that I am

Yours always the same,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February, 1882*]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—My wife and I are very much vexed to hear you are still unwell. We are both keeping far

better ; she especially seems quite to have taken a turn—the turn, we shall hope. Please let us know how you get on, and what has been the matter with you ; Braemar I believe—the vile hole. You know what a lazy rascal I am, so you won't be surprised at a short letter, I know ; indeed, you will be much more surprised at my having had the decency to write at all. We have got rid of our young, pretty, and incompetent maid ; and now we have a fine, canny, twinkling, shrewd, auld-farrant peasant body, who gives us good food and keeps us in good spirits. If we could only understand what she says ! But she speaks Davos language, which is to German what Aberdeen-awa' is to English, so it comes heavy. God bless you, my dear Cummy ; and so says Fanny forbye.—Ever your affectionate,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos*], 22nd February, '82

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Your most welcome letter has raised clouds of sulphur from my horizon. . . .

I am glad you have gone back to your music. Life is a poor thing, I am more and more convinced, without an art, that always waits for us and is always new. Art and marriage are two very good stand-by's.

In an article which will appear some time in the *Cornhill, Talk and Talkers*, and where I have full-lengthened the conversation of Bob, Henley, Jenkin, Simpson, Symonds, and Gosse, I have at the end one single word about yourself. It may amuse you to see it.

We are coming to Scotland after all, so we shall meet, which pleases me, and I do believe I am strong enough to stand it this time. My knee is still quite lame.

My wife is better again. . . . But we take it by turns ; it is the dog that is ill now.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.



## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I was considering whether to undertake the volume on Keats for Morley's *English Men of Letters*. The *Gossip on Romance* did not appear until the next November—in *Longman's Magazine*. *The Adventures of John Delafield* never came into being.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February, 1882*]

DEAR COLVIN,—About Keats—well yes, I wonder ; I see all your difficulties and yet, I have the strongest kind of feeling that critical biography is your real vein. The Landor was one nail ; another, I think, would be good for you and the public. Indeed I would do the Keats. He is worth doing ; it is a brave and a sad little story, and the critical part lies deep in the very vitals of art. All summed, I would do him ; remember it is but a small order alongside of Landor ; and £100, and kudos, and a good word for the poor great lad, who will otherwise fall among the molluscs. Up, heart ! give me a John Keats ! Houghton, though he has done it with grace, has scarce done it with grip.

I have put you into *Talk and Talkers* sure enough. God knows, I hope I shall offend nobody ; I do begin to quake mightily over that paper. I have a *Gossip on Romance* about done ; it puts some real criticism in a light way, I think. It is destined for Longman who (dead secret) is bringing out a new Mag. (6d.) in the Autumn. Dead Secret : all his letters are three deep with masks and passwords, and I swear on a skull daily. F. has re-read *Treasure Id.*, against which she protested ; and now she thinks the end about as good as the beginning ; only some six chapters situate about the midst of the tale to be re-written. This sounds hopefuller. My new long story, *The Adventures of John Delafield*, is largely planned.

R. L. S.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

In the early months of this year a hurt knee kept Stevenson more indoors than was good for him.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February, 1882*]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Here comes the letter as promised last night. And first two requests : Pray send the enclosed to c/o Blackmore's publisher, 'tis from Fanny ; second, pray send us Routledge's shilling book, Edward Mayhew's *Dogs*, by return if it can be managed.

Our dog is very ill again, poor fellow, looks very ill too, only sleeps at night because of morphine ; and we do not know what ails him, only fear it to be canker of the ear. He makes a bad, black spot in our life, poor, selfish, silly, little tangle ; and my wife is wretched. Otherwise she is better, steadily and slowly moving up through all her relapses. My knee never gets the least better ; it hurts to-night, which it has not done for long. I do not suppose my doctor knows any least thing about it. He says it is a nerve that I struck, but I assure you he does not know.

I have just finished a paper, *A Gossip on Romance*, in which I have tried to do, very popularly, about one-half of the matter you wanted me to try. In a way, I have found an answer to the question. But the subject was hardly fit for so chatty a paper, and it is all loose ends. If ever I do my book on the Art of Literature, I shall gather them together and be clear.

To-morrow, having once finished off the touches still due on this, I shall tackle *San Francisco* for you. Then the tide of work will fairly bury me, lost to view and hope. You have no idea what it costs me to wring out my work now. I have certainly been a fortnight over this *Romance*, sometimes five hours a day : and yet it is about my usual length—eight pages or so, and would be a d—d sight the better for another curry. But I do not think I can honestly re-write it all ; so I call it done, and shall only straighten words in a revision currently.

I had meant to go on for a great while, and say all manner



of entertaining things. But all's gone. I am now an idiot.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

The following flight of fancy refers to supposed errors of judgment on the part of an eminent firm of publishers, with whom Stevenson had at this time no connection. Very soon afterwards he entered into relations with them which proved equally pleasant and profitable to both parties, and were continued on the most cordial terms until his death.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March, 1882*]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Last night we had a dinner-party, consisting of the John Addington, curry, onions (lovely onions), and beefsteak. So unusual is any excitement, that F. and I feel this morning as if we had been to a coronation. However I must, I suppose, write.

I was sorry about your female contributor squabble. 'Tis very comic, but really unpleasant. But what care I? Now that I illustrate my own books, I can always offer you a situation in our house—S. L. Osbourne and Co. As an author gets a halfpenny a copy of verses, and an artist a penny a cut, perhaps a proof-reader might get several pounds a year.

O that Coronation! What a shouting crowd there was! I obviously got a firework in each eye. The king looked very magnificent, to be sure; and that great hall where we feasted on seven hundred delicate foods, and drank fifty royal wines—*quel coup d'œil!* but was it not overdone, even for a coronation—almost a vulgar luxury? And eleven is certainly too late to begin dinner. (It was really 6.30 instead of 5.30.)

Your list of books that Cassells have refused in these weeks is not quite complete; they also refused—

1. Six undiscovered Tragedies, one romantic Comedy, a fragment of Journal extending over six years, and an unfinished Autobiography reaching up to the first performance of *King John*. By William Shakespeare.

2. The Journals and Private Correspondence of David, King of Israel.

3. Poetical Works of Arthur, Iron Dook of Wellington, including a Monody on Napoleon.

4. Eight books of an unfinished novel, *Solomon Crabb*. By Henry Fielding.

5. Stevenson's Moral Emblems.

You also neglected to mention, as *per contra*, that they had during the same time accepted and triumphantly published Brown's *Handbook to Cricket*, Jones's *First French Reader*, and Robinson's *Picturesque Cheshire*, uniform with the same author's *Stately Homes of Salop*.

O if that list could come true! How we would tear at *Solomon Crabb*! O what a bully, bully, bully business. Which would you read first—Shakespeare's Autobiography, or his journals? What sport the Monody on Napoleon would be—what wooden verse, what stucco ornament! I should read both the autobiography and the journals before I looked at one of the plays, beyond the names of them, which shows that Saintsbury was bright, and I do care more for life than for poetry. No—I take it back. Do you know one of the tragedies—a Bible tragedy too—*David*—was written in his third period—much about the same time as *Lear*? The comedy, *April Rain*, is also a late work. *Beckett* is a fine ranting piece, like *Richard II.*, but very fine for the stage. Irving is to play it this autumn when I'm in town; the part rather suits him—but who is to play Henry—a tremendous creation, sir. Betterton in his private journal seems to have seen this piece; and he says distinctly that Henry is the best part in any play. "Though," he adds, "how it be with the ancient plays I know not. But in this I have ever feared to do ill, and indeed will not be persuaded to that undertaking." So says Betterton. *Rufus* is not so good; I am not pleased with *Rufus*; plainly a *rifaccimento* of some inferior work; but there are some damned fine lines. As for the purely satiric ill-minded *Abelard and Heloise*, another *Troilus*,—*quoi!* it is not pleasant, truly, but what strength, what verve, what knowledge of life, and the Canon! What a



finished, humorous, rich picture is the Canon! Ah, there was nobody like Shakespeare. But what I like is the David and Absalom business: Absalom is so well felt—you love him as David did; David's speech is one roll of royal music from the first act to the fifth.

I am enjoying *Solomon Crabb* extremely; Solomon's capital adventure with the two highwaymen and Squire Trecothick and Parson Vance; it is as good, I think, as anything in *Joseph Andrews*. I have just come to the part where the highwayman with the black patch over his eye has tricked poor Solomon into his place, and the squire and the parson are hearing the evidence. Parson Vance is splendid. How good, too, is old Mrs. Crabb and the coast-guard'sman in the third chapter, or her delightful quarrel with the sexton of Seaham; Lord Conybeare is surely a little overdone; but I don't know either; he's such damned fine sport. Do you like Sally Barnes? I'm in love with her. Constable Muddon is as good as Dogberry and Verges put together; when he takes Solomon to the cage, and the highwayman gives him Solomon's own guinea for his pains, and kisses Mrs. Muddon, and just then up drives Lord Conybeare, and instead of helping Solomon, calls him all the rascals in Christendom—O Henry Fielding, Henry Fielding! Yet perhaps the scenes at Seaham are the best. But I'm bewildered among all these excellences.

Stay, cried a voice that made the welkin crack—  
This here's a dream, return and study BLACK!—  
Ever yours,

R. L. S.

### TO ALEXANDER IRELAND

The following is in reply to a letter Stevenson had received on some questions connected with his proposed Life of Hazlitt from the veteran critic and bibliographer, since deceased, Mr. Alexander Ireland. At the foot is to be found the first reference to his new amusement of wood engraving for the Davos Press.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March, 1882*]

MY DEAR SIR,—This formidable paper need not alarm you; it argues nothing beyond penury of other sorts, and

is not at all likely to lead me into a long letter. If I were at all grateful it would, for yours has just passed for me a considerable part of a stormy evening. And speaking of gratitude, let me at once and with becoming eagerness accept your kind invitation to Bowdon. I shall hope, if we can agree as to dates when I am nearer hand, to come to you sometime in the month of May. I was pleased to hear you were a Scot ; I feel more at home with my compatriots always ; perhaps the more we are away, the stronger we feel that bond.

You ask about Davos ; I have discoursed about it already, rather sillily I think, in the *Pall Mall*, and I mean to say no more, but the ways of the Muse are dubious and obscure, and who knows ? I may be wiled again. As a place of residence, beyond a splendid climate, it has to my eyes but one advantage—the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds—I daresay you know his work, but the man is far more interesting. It has done me, in my two winters' Alpine exile, much good ; so much, that I hope to leave it now for ever, but would not be understood to boast. In my present unpardonably crazy state, any cold might send me skipping, either back to Davos, or further off. Let us hope not. It is dear ; a little dreary : very far from many things that both my taste and my needs prompt me to seek ; and altogether not the place that I should choose of my free will.

I am chilled by your description of the man in question, though I had almost argued so much from his cold and undigested volume. If the republication does not interfere with my publisher, it will not interfere with me ; but there, of course, comes the hitch. I do not know Mr. Bentley, and I fear all publishers like the devil from legend and experience both. However, when I come to town, we shall, I hope, meet and understand each other as well as author and publisher ever do. I liked his letters ; they seemed hearty, kind, and personal. Still—I am notably suspicious of the trade—your news of this republication alarms me.

The best of the present French novelists seems to me,



incomparably, Daudet. *Les Rois en Exil* comes very near being a masterpiece. For Zola I have no toleration, though the curious, eminently bourgeois, and eminently French creature has power of a kind. But I would he were deleted. I would not give a chapter of old Dumas (meaning himself, not his collaborators) for the whole boiling of the Zolas. Romance with the smallpox—as the great one: diseased anyway and blackhearted and fundamentally at enmity with joy.

I trust that Mrs. Ireland does not object to smoking; and if you are a teetotaller, I beg you to mention it before I come—I have all the vices; some of the virtues also, let us hope—that, at least, of being a Scotchman, and yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

*P.S.*—My father was in the old High School the last year, and walked in the procession to the new. I blush to own I am an Academy boy; it seems modern, and smacks not of the soil.

*P.P.S.*—I enclose a good joke—at least, I think so—my first efforts at wood-engraving printed by my stepson, a boy of thirteen. I will put in also one of my later attempts. I have been nine days at the art—observe my progress.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, March, 1882*]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Herewith *Moral Emblems*. The elephant by Fanny—the rest by me.

I would have sent it long ago. But I must explain. I brought home with me from my bad times in America two strains of unsoundness of mind, the first, a perpetual fear that I can do no more work—the second, a perpetual fear that my friends have quarrelled with me. I struggle as hard as I know how against both, but a judicious post-card would sometimes save me the expense of the second.

This last long silence of yours drove me into really believing it, and I dared not write to you.

Well, it's ancient history now, and here are the emblems. A second series is in the press.

*Silverado* is still unfinished ; but I think I have done well on the whole, as you say. I shall be home, I hope, sometime in May, perhaps before ; it depends on Fanny's health, which is still far from good and often alarms me. I shall then see your collections. I shall not put pen to paper till I settle somewhere else ; Hazlitt had better simmer a while. I have to see Ireland too, who has most kindly written to me and invited me to see his collections.

Symonds grows much on me ; in many ways, what you would least expect, a very sound man, and very wise in a wise way. It is curious how F. and I always turn to him for advice : we have learned that his advice is good.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

### TO MRS. GOSSE

Mrs. Gosse had sent R. L. S. a miniature Bible illustrated with rude cuts, picked up at an outdoor stall. "Lloyd's new work" is *Black Canyon*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 16, 1882*]

DEAR MRS. GOSSE,—Thank you heartily for the Bible, which is exquisite. I thoroughly appreciate the whole ; but have you done justice to the third lion in Daniel (like the third murderer in Macbeth)—a singular animal—study him well. The soldier in the fiery furnace beats me.

I enclose a programme of Lloyd's new work. The work I shall send to-morrow, for the publisher is out and I dare not touch his "plant" : *il m'en cuirait*. The work in question I think a huge lark, but still droll is the author's attitude. Not one incident holds with another from beginning to end ; and whenever I discover a new inconsistency, Sam is the first to laugh—with a kind of humorous pride at the thing being so silly.



I saw the note, and I was so sorry my article had not come in time for the old lady. We should all hurry up and praise the living. I must praise Tupper. À propos, did you ever read him?—or know any one who had? That is very droll; but the truth is we all live in a clique, buy each other's books and like each other's books; and the great, gaunt, grey, gaping public snaps its big fingers and reads Talmage and Tupper—and *Black Canyon*. My wife is better; I, for the moment, am but so-so myself; but the printer is in very—how shall we say?—large type at this present, and the sound of the press never ceases. Remember me to Weg.—Yours very truly,

(signed) ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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## NOTICE

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### ILLUSTRATED BLACK CANYON,

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WILD ADVENTURES IN THE FAR WEST.

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Although *Black Canyon* is rather shorter than ordinary for that kind of story, it is an excellent work. We cordially recommend it to our readers.—*Weekly Messenger*.

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A very remarkable work. Every page produces an effect. The end is as singular as the beginning. I never saw such a work before.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

Stevenson and Mr. Gosse were still meditating a volume in which some of the famous historical murder cases should be retold (see above, p. 55). "Gray" and "Keats" are two volumes in Macmillan's series *English Men of Letters*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March 23, 1882*]

MY DEAR WEG,—And I had just written the best note to Mrs. Gosse that was in my power. Most blameable.  
I now send (for Mrs. Gosse)

### BLACK CANYON

Also an advertisement of my new appearance as poet (bard, rather) and hartis on wood. The cut represents the Hero and the Eagle, and is emblematic of Cortez first viewing the Pacific Ocean, which (according to the bard Keats) it took place in Darien. The cut is much admired for the sentiment of discovery, the manly proportions of the voyager, and the fine impression of tropical scenes and the untrodden WASTE, so aptly rendered by the hartis.

I would send you the book; but I declare I'm ruined. I got a penny a cut and a halfpenny a set of verses from the flint-hearted publisher, and only one specimen copy, as I'm a sinner. — was apostolic alongside of Osbourne.

I hope you will be able to decipher this, written at steam speed with a breaking pen, the hot-fast postman at my heels. No excuse, says you. None, sir, says I, and touches my 'at most civil (extraordinary evolution of pen, now quite doomed—to resume—) I have not put pen to the Bloody Murder yet. But it is early on my list; and when once I get to it, three weeks should see the last bloodstain—maybe a fortnight. For I am beginning to combine an extraordinary laborious slowness while at work, with the most surprisingly quick results in the way of finished manu-



scripts. How goes Gray? Colvin is to do Keats. My wife is still not well.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

### TO DR. ALEXANDER JAPP

“The enclosed” means a packet of the Davos Press cuts.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March, 1882*]

MY DEAR DR. JAPP,—You must think me a forgetful rogue, as indeed I am; for I have but now told my publisher to send you a copy of the *Familiar Studies*. However, I own I have delayed this letter till I could send you the enclosed. Remembering the nights at Braemar when we visited the Picture Gallery, I hoped they might amuse you. You see, we do some publishing hereaway. I shall hope to see you in town in May.—Always yours faithfully,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO DR. ALEXANDER JAPP

The references in the first paragraph are to the volume *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 1, 1882*]

MY DEAR DR. JAPP,—A good day to date this letter, which is in fact a confession of incapacity. During my wife's illness I somewhat lost my head, and entirely lost a great quire of corrected proofs. This is one of the results; I hope there are none more serious. I was never so sick of any volume as I was of that: I was continually receiving fresh proofs with fresh infinitesimal difficulties. I was ill—I did really fear my wife was worse than ill. Well, it's out now; and though I have observed several carelessnesses myself, and now here's another of your finding—of which, indeed, I ought to be ashamed—it will only justify the sweeping humility of the Preface. Symonds was actually dining with us when your letter came, and I com-

municated your remarks. . . . He is a far better and more interesting thing than any of his books.

The Elephant was my wife's ; so she is proportionately elate you should have picked it out for praise—from a collection, let me add, so replete with the highest qualities of art.

My wicked carcase, as John Knox calls it, holds together wonderfully. In addition to many other things, and a volume of travel, I find I have written, since December, 90 *Cornhill* pages of magazine work—essays and stories : 40,000 words, and I am none the worse—I am the better. I begin to hope I may, if not outlive this wolverine upon my shoulders, at least carry him bravely like Symonds and Alexander Pope. I begin to take a pride in that hope.

I shall be much interested to see your criticisms ; you might perhaps send them to me. I believe you know that is not dangerous ; one folly I have not—I am not touchy under criticism.

Lloyd and my wife both beg to be remembered ; and Lloyd sends as a present a work of his own. I hope you feel flattered ; for this is *simply the first time he has ever given one away*. I have to buy my own works, I can tell you.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

From about this time until 1885 Mr. Henley acted in an informal way as agent for R. L. S. in most of his dealings with publishers in London. "Both" in the second paragraph means, I think, *Treasure Island* and *Silverado Squatters*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April, 1882*]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—I hope and hope for a long letter—soon I hope to be superseded by long talks—and it comes not. I remember I have never formally thanked you for that hundred quid, nor in general for the introduction to Chatto and Windus, and continue to bury you in copy as if you were my private secretary. Well, I am not uncon-



scious of it all ; but I think least said is often best, generally best ; gratitude is a tedious sentiment, it's not ductile, not dramatic.

If Chatto should take both, *cui dedicare* ? I am running out of dedikees ; if I do, the whole fun of writing is stranded. *Treasure Island*, if it comes out, and I mean it shall, of course goes to Lloyd. Lemme see, I have now dedicated to

W. E. H. [William Ernest Henley].

S. C. [Sidney Colvin].

T. S. [Thomas Stevenson].

Simp. [Sir Walter Simpson].

There remain : C. B., the Williamses—you know they were the parties who stuck up for us about our marriage, and Mrs. W. was my guardian angel, and our Best Man and Bridesmaid rolled in one, and the only third of the wedding party—my sister-in-law, who is booked for *Prince Otto*—Jenkin I suppose sometime—George Meredith, the only man of genius of my acquaintance, and then I believe I'll have to take to the dead, the immortal memory business.

Talking of Meredith, I have just re-read for the third and fourth time *The Egoist*. When I shall have read it the sixth or seventh, I begin to see I shall know about it. You will be astonished when you come to re-read it ; I had no idea of the matter—human, red matter he has contrived to plug and pack into that strange and admirable book. Willoughby is, of course, a pure discovery ; a complete set of nerves not heretofore examined, and yet running all over the human body—a suit of nerves. Clara is the best girl ever I saw anywhere. Vernon is almost as good. The manner and the faults of the book greatly justify themselves on further study. Only Dr. Middleton does not hang together ; and Ladies Busshe and Culmer *sont des monstruosités*. Vernon's conduct makes a wonderful odd contrast with Daniel Deronda's. I see more and more that Meredith is built for immortality.

Talking of which, Heywood, as a small immortal, an immortalet, claims some attention. *The Woman killed*

*with Kindness* is one of the most striking novels—not plays, though it's more of a play than anything else of his—I ever read. He had such a sweet, sound soul, the old boy. The death of the two pirates in *Fortune by Sea and Land* is a document. He had obviously been present and heard Purser and Clinton take death by the beard with similar braggadocios. Purser and Clinton, names of pirates; Scarlet and Bobbington, names of highwaymen. He had the touch of names, I think. No man I ever knew had such a sense, such a tact, for English nomenclature: Rainsforth, Lacy, Audley, Forrest, Acton, Spencer, Frankford—so his names run.

Byron not only wrote *Don Juan*; he called Joan of Arc “a fanatical strumpet.” These are his words. I think the double shame, first to a great poet, second to an English noble, passes words.

Here is a strange gossip.—I am yours loquaciously,  
R. L. S.

My lungs are said to be in a splendid state. A cruel examination, an exanimation I may call it, had this brave result. *Taiïaut!* Hillo! Hey! Stand by! Avast! Hurrah!

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The “birthday present” here announced was a copy of the *Cornhill Magazine* for the current month of April, containing the essay *Talk and Talkers*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 9, 1882*]

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Herewith please find belated birthday present. Fanny has another.

Cockshot = Jenkin.

Jack = Bob.

Burly = Henley.

Athelred = Simpson.

Opalstein = Symonds.

Purcel = Gosse.

But

pray

regard

these

as

secrets.

My dear mother, how can I keep up with your breathless



changes? Innerleithen, Cramond, Bridge of Allan, Dunblane, Selkirk. I lean to Cramond, but I shall be pleased anywhere, any respite from Davos; never mind, it has been a good, though a dear lesson. Now, with my improved health, if I can pass the summer, I believe I shall be able no more to exceed, no more to draw on you. It is time I sufficed for myself indeed. And I believe I can.

I am still far from satisfied about Fanny; she is certainly better, but it is by fits a good deal, and the symptoms continue, which should not be. I had her persuaded to leave without me this very day (Saturday 8th), but the disclosure of my mismanagement broke up that plan; she would not leave me lest I should mismanage more. I think this an unfair revenge; but I have been so bothered that I cannot struggle. All Davos has been drinking our wine. During the month of March, three litres a day were drunk—O it is too sickening—and that is only a specimen. It is enough to make any one a misanthrope, but the right thing is to hate the donkey that was duped—which I devoutly do.

I have this winter finished *Treasure Island*, written the preface to the *Studies*, a small book about the *Inland Voyage* size, *The Silverado Squatters*, and over and above that upwards of ninety (90) *Cornhill* pages of magazine work. No man can say I have been idle.—Your affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO R. A. M. STEVENSON

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, April, 1882*]

MY DEAR BOB,—Yours received. I have received a communication by same mail from my mother, clamouring for news, which I must answer as soon as I've done this. Of course, I shall paint your game in lively colours.

I hope to get away from here—let me not speak of it ungratefully—from here—by Thursday at latest. I am indeed much better; but a slip of the foot may still cast me back. I must walk circumspectly yet awhile. But O to be able to out and get wet, and not spit blood next day!

Yes, I remember the *enfantement* of the *Arabian Nights* ; the first idea of all was the hansom cabs, which I communicated to you in St. Leonard's Terrace drawing-room. That same afternoon the Prince de Galles and the Suicide Club were invented ; and several more now forgotten. I must try to start 'em again.

Lloyd I believe is to be a printer—in the meantime he confines himself to being an expense. He is a first-rate lad for all that. He is now interrupting me about twice to the line, which does not condooce to clarity, I'm afraid.

Fanny is still far from well, quite far from well. My faith is in the Pirate.

I enclose all my artistic works ; they are woodcuts—I cut them with a knife out of blocks of wood : I am a wood-engraver ; I aaaam a wooodd engraaver. Lloyd then prints 'em : are they not fun ? I doat on them ; in my next venture, I am going to have colour printing ; it will be very laborious, six blocks to cut for each picter, but the result would be pyramidal.

If I get through the summer, I settle in Autumn in le pays de France ; I believe in the Brittany, and become a *Snoozer*. You will come and snooze a while won't you, and try and get Louisa to join.

Pepys was a decent fellow ; singularly like Charles Baxter, by the way, in every character of mind and taste, and not unlike him in face. I did not mean I had been too just to him but not just enough to bigger swells. I would rather have *known* Pepys than the whole jing-bang ; I doat on him as a card to know.

We shall be pretty poor at the start, of course, but I guess we can haul through. Only intending visitors to the Britannic Castle must not look for nightingales' tongues. When next you see the form of the jeune et beau pray give him my love, when I come to Weybridge, I'll hope to see him.

Ever your affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON, 1<sup>er</sup> Roi de Béotie

Pour copie conforme

Le secrétaire Royale, W. P. Bannatyne.



## TO TREVOR HADDON

The few remaining letters of this period are dated from Edinburgh and from Stobo Manse, near Peebles. This, in the matter of weather and health, was the most disappointing of all Stevenson's attempts at summer residence in Scotland. Before going to Stobo he made a short excursion with his father to Lochearnhead; and later spent some three weeks with me at Kingussie, but from neither place wrote any letters worth preserving. The following was addressed to a young art-student who had read the works of Walt Whitman after reading Stevenson's essay on him, and being staggered by some things he found there had written asking for further comment and counsel.

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [June, 1882]

DEAR SIR,—If I have in any way disquieted you, I believe you are justified in bidding me stand and deliver a remedy if there be one: which is the point. 1st I am of your way of thinking: that a good deal of Whitman is as well taken once but 2nd I quite believe that it is better to have everything brought before one in books. In that way the problems reach us when we are cool, and not warped by the sophistries of an instant passion. Life itself presents its problems with a terrible directness and at the very hour when we are least able to judge calmly. Hence this Pisgah sight of all things, off the top of a book, is only a rational preparation for the ugly grips that must follow.

But 3rd, no man can settle another's life for him. It is the test of the nature and courage of each that he shall decide it for himself. Each in turn must meet and beard the Sphinx. Some things however I may say—and you will treat them as things read in a book for you to accept or refuse as you shall see most fit.

Go not out of your way to make difficulties. Hang back from life while you are young. Shoulder no responsibilities. You do not yet know how far you can trust yourself—it will not be very far, or you are more fortunate than I am. If you can keep your sexual desires in order, be glad, be very glad. Some day, when you meet your fate, you will be free, and the better man. *Don't make a boy*

*and girl friendship that which it is not.* Look at Burns : that is where amourettes conduct an average good man ; and a tepid marriage is only a more selfish amourette—in the long run. Whatever you do, see that you don't sacrifice a woman ; that's where all imperfect loves conduct us. At the same time, if you can make it convenient to be chaste, for God's sake, avoid the primness of your virtue ; hardness to a poor harlot is a sin lower than the ugliest unchastity.

Never be in a hurry anyhow.

There is my sermon.

Certainly, you cannot too earnestly go in for the Greek ; and about any art, think last of what pays, first of what pleases. It is in that spirit only that an art can be made. Progress in art is made by learning to *enjoy* it. That which seems a little dull at first, is found to contain the elements of pleasure more largely though more quietly commingled.

I return to my sermon for one more word : Natural desire gives you no right to any particular woman : that comes with love only, and don't be too ready to believe in love : there are many shams : the true love will not allow you to reason about it.

It is your fault if I appear so pulpiteering.

Wishing you well in life and art, and that you may long be young.—Believe me, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

[*Edinburgh*] Sunday [June, 1882]

. . . . NOTE turned up, but no grey opusculé, which, however, will probably turn up to-morrow in time to go out with me to Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire, where, if you can make it out, you will be a good soul to pay a visit. I shall write again about the opusculé ; and about Stobo, which I have not seen since I was thirteen, though my memory speaks delightfully of it.

I have been very tired and seedy, or I should have



written before, *inter alia*, to tell you that I had visited my murder place and found *living traditions* not yet in any printed book ; most startling. I also got photographs taken, but the negatives have not yet turned up. I lie on the sofa to write this, whence the pencil : having slept yesterday— $1 + 4 + 7\frac{1}{2} = 12\frac{1}{2}$  hours and being (9 A.M.) very anxious to sleep again. The arms of Porpus, quoi ! A poppy gules, etc.

From Stobo you can conquer Peebles and Selkirk, or to give them their old decent names, Tweeddale and Ettrick. Think of having been called Tweeddale, and being called PEEBLES ! Did I ever tell you my skit on my own travel books ? We understand that Mr. Stevenson has in the press another volume of unconventional travels : *Personal Adventures in Peeblesshire*. Je la trouve méchante.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

Did I say I had seen a verse on two of the Buccaneers ? I did, and *ça-y-est*.

### TO TREVOR HADDON

17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh [June, 1882]

MY DEAR SIR,—I see nothing “cheekie” in anything you have done. Your letters have naturally given me much pleasure, for it seems to me you are a pretty good young fellow, as young fellows go ; and if I add that you remind me of myself, you need not accuse me of retrospective vanity.

You now know an address which will always find me ; you might let me have your address in London ; I do not promise anything—for I am always overworked in London—but I shall, if I can arrange it, try to see you.

I am afraid I am not so rigid on chastity : you are probably right in your view ; but this seems to me a dilemma with two horns, the real curse of a man's life in our state of society—and a woman's too, although, for many reasons, it appears somewhat differently with the enslaved sex.

By your "fate" I believe I meant your marriage, or that love at least which may befall any one of us at the shortest notice and overthrow the most settled habits and opinions. I call that your fate, because then, if not before, you can no longer hang back, but must stride out into life and act.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

Mr. Gosse had mistaken the name of the Peeblesshire manse, and is reproached accordingly. "Gray" is Mr. Gosse's volume on that poet in Mr. Morley's series of *English Men of Letters*.

*Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire [July, 1882]*

I WOULD shoot you, but I have no bow ;  
The place is not called Stobs, but Stobo.  
As Gallic Kids complain of "Bobo,"  
I mourn for your mistake of Stobo.

First, we shall be gone in September. But if you think of coming in August, my mother will hunt for you with pleasure. We should all be overjoyed—though Stobo it could not be, as it is but a kirk and manse, but possibly somewhere within reach. Let us know.

Second, I have read your *Gray* with care. A more difficult subject I can scarce fancy : it is crushing ; yet I think you have managed to shadow forth a man, and a good man too ; and honestly, I doubt if I could have done the same. This may seem egoistic ; but you are not such a fool as to think so. It is the natural expression of real praise. The book as a whole is readable ; your subject peeps every here and there out of the crannies like a shy violet—he could do no more—and his aroma hangs there.

I write to catch a minion of the post. Hence brevity. Answer about the house.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

In the heat of conversation Stevenson was accustomed to invent any number of fictitious personages, generally Scottish, and to give them names and to set them playing their imaginary parts in life, reputable or otherwise. Many of these inventions, of whom Mr. Pirbright Smith and Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne were two, assumed for himself and his friends a kind of substantial existence; and constantly in talk, and occasionally in writing, he would keep up the play of reporting their sayings and doings quite gravely, as in the following.

[*Stobo Manse, July, 1882*]

DEAR HENLEY, . . . I am not worth an old damn. I am also crushed by bad news of Symonds; his good lung going; I cannot help reading it as a personal hint; God help us all! Really I am not very fit for work; but I try, try, and nothing comes of it.

I believe we shall have to leave this place; it is low, damp, and *mauchy*; the rain it raineth every day; and the glass goes *tol-de-rol-de-riddle*.

Yet it's a bonny bit; I wish I could live in it, but doubt. I wish I was well away somewhere else. I feel like flight some days; honour bright.

Pirbright Smith is well. Old Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne is here staying at a country inn. His whole baggage is a pair of socks and a book in a fishing-basket; and he borrows even a rod from the landlord. He walked here over the hills from Sanquhar, "singin'," he says, "like a mavis." I naturally asked him about Hazlitt. "He wouldnae take his drink," he said, "a queer, queer fellow." But did not seem further communicative. He says he has become "releegious," but still swears like a trooper. I asked him if he had no headquarters. "No likely," said he. He says he is writing his memoirs, which will be interesting. He once met Borrow: they boxed; "and Geordie," says the old man chuckling, "gave me the damnedest hiding." Of Wordsworth he remarked, "He wasnae sound in the faith, sir, an' a milk-blooded, blue-spectacled bitch forbye. But his po'mes are grand—there's no denying that." I asked him what his book was. "I havenae mind," said

he—that was his only book ! On turning it out, I found it was one of my own, and on showing it to him, he remembered it at once. “ O aye,” he said, “ I mind now. It’s pretty bad : ye’ll have to do better than that, chieldy,” and chuckled, chuckled. He is a strange old figure, to be sure. He cannot endure Pirbright Smith—“ a mere æsthetic,” he said. “ Pooh ! ” “ Fishin’ and releegion—these are my aysthatics,” he wound up.

I thought this would interest you, so scribbled it down. I still hope to get more out of him about Hazlitt, though he utterly pooh-poohed the idea of writing H.’s life. “ Ma life now,” he said, “ there’s been queer things in *it*.” He is seventy-nine ! but may well last to a hundred !—Yours ever,

R. L. S.







VII

THE RIVIERA AGAIN—MARSEILLES AND  
HYÈRES

OCTOBER, 1882—AUGUST, 1884





## VII

### THE RIVIERA AGAIN— MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

**I**N the two years and odd months since his return from California, Stevenson had made no solid gain of health. His winters, and especially his second winter, at Davos had seemed to do him much temporary good ; but during the summers in Scotland he had lost as much as he had gained, or more. Loving Provence and the Mediterranean shore from of old, he now made up his mind to try them once again.

As the ways and restrictions of a settled invalid were repugnant to Stevenson's character and instincts, so were the life and society of a regular invalid station depressing and uncongenial to him. He determined accordingly to avoid settling in one of these, and hoped to find a suitable climate and habitation that should be near, though not in, some centre of the active and ordinary life of man, with accessible markets, libraries, and other resources. In September, 1882, he started with his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson in search of a new home, and thought first of Western Provence, a region new to him. Arriving at Montpellier, he was laid up again with a bad bout of his chest troubles, and the doctor not recommending him to stay, returned to Marseilles. Here he was rejoined by his wife, and after a few days' exploration in the neighbourhood they lighted on what seemed exactly the home they wanted. This was a roomy and attractive enough house and garden called the Campagne Defli, near the manufacturing suburb of St. Marcel, in a sheltered position in full



view of the shapely coastward hills. By the third week in October they were installed, and in eager hopes of pleasant days to come and a return to working health. These hopes were not realised. Week after week went on, and the hemorrhages and fits of fever and exhaustion did not diminish. Work, except occasional verses, and a part of the story called *The Treasure of Franchard*, would not flow, and the time had to be whiled away with games of patience and other resources of the sick man. Nearly two months were thus passed; during the whole of one of them Stevenson had not been able to go beyond the garden; and by Christmas he had to face the fact that the air of the place was tainted. An epidemic of fever, due to some defect of drainage, broke out, and it became clear that this could be no home for Stevenson. Accordingly, at his wife's instance, though having scarce the strength to travel, he left suddenly for Nice, she staying behind to pack their chattels and wind up their affairs and responsibilities as well as might be. Various misadventures, miscarriages of telegrams, journeys taken at cross purposes and the like, making existence uncomfortably dramatic at the moment, caused the couple to believe for a while that they had fairly lost each other. Mrs. Stevenson allows me to print a letter from herself to Mr. J. A. Symonds vividly relating these predicaments (see p. 220 foll.). At last, in the course of January, they came safely together at Marseilles, and next made a few weeks' stay at Nice, where Stevenson's health quickly mended. Thence they returned as far as Hyères. Staying here through the greater part of February, at the Hôtel des Îles d'Or, and finding the place to their liking, they cast about once more for a resting-place, and were this time successful.

The house chosen by the Stevensons at Hyères was not near the sea, but inland, on the road above the old town and beneath the ruins of the castle. The Chalet La Solitude it was called; a cramped but habitable cottage built in the Swiss manner, with a pleasant strip of garden, and a view and situation hardly to be bettered. Here the family lived for the next sixteen months (March, 1883, to July,

1884). To the first part of this period Stevenson often afterwards referred as the happiest time of his life. His lung trouble abated for the time being enough to afford, at least to his own buoyant spirit, a strong hope of ultimate recovery. He delighted in his surroundings, and realised for the first time the joys of a true home of his own. The last shadow of a cloud between himself and his parents had passed away; and towards his father, now in declining health, and often suffering from moods of constitutional depression, the son begins on his part to assume, how touchingly and tenderly will be seen from the following letters, a quasi-paternal attitude of encouragement and monition. At the same time his work on the completion of the *Silverado Squatters*, on *Prince Otto*, the *Child's Garden of Verses* (for which his own name was *Penny Whistles*), on the *Black Arrow* (designated hereinafter, on account of its Old English dialect, as "tushery"), and other undertakings prospered well. In the autumn the publication of *Treasure Island* in book form brought with it the first breath of popular applause. The reader will see how modest a price Stevenson was content, nay, delighted, to receive for this classic. It was two or three years yet before he could earn enough to support himself and his family by literature, a thing he had always been earnestly bent on doing, regarding it as the only justification for his chosen way of life. In the meantime, it must be understood, whatever help he needed from his father was from the hour of his marriage always amply and ungrudgingly given.

In September of the same year, 1883, Stevenson had felt deeply the death of his old friend James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* and the references in the following letters). But still his health held out fairly, until, in January, 1884, on a visit to Nice, he was unexpectedly prostrated anew by an attack which brought him to death's door. Returning to his home, his recovery had been only partial when, after four months (May, 1884), a recurrence of violent hemorrhages from the lung once more prostrated him completely; soon after which he quitted Hyères, and the epidemic of cholera which broke out



there the same summer prevented all thoughts of his return.

The Hyères time, both during the happy and hard-working months of March–December, 1883, and the semi-convalescence of February–May, 1884, was a prolific one in the way of correspondence; and there is perhaps no period of his life when his letters reflect so fully the variety of his moods and the eagerness of his occupations.

## TO MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

*Montpellier, Oct., 1882*

MY DEAR,—The Doctoribus just left me and promises me better. He allows me to go out. He assures me there is nothing wrong in my lungs: “statu quo complete,” he swears, only catarrh. He says if I could have a pinch of gout, I should probably find my lungs leave me in peace. Does not know however which I should prefer. The blood has almost stopped: it is very faint now.

If my mother is not to come with you to Paris, I don't know that I want you to come at all. I cannot bear to have you travelling alone. My mother might come to Paris with you. Tell my mother she has to come to Paris with you, no excuse will serve.

If she brings you to Paris, you must come (first, second is no good on this line)

to Hotel du Jura,

Dijon. 1st night.

Hotel de l'Univers,

Lyons. 2nd night.

And there I would have a word telling you where to come and meet me on the morrow.

That is not very appalling, is it?

And you can then come and produce a tonic effect on your papa, who is open to tonic effects of that description. If you think I don't want to see you, you are a great baby; kiss my Wogg; I like him to be bad.

I am going to wear beautiful rich clothing always now *on condition that you do*. When you come you shall have a kiss.

Ever your loving husband

LOUIS.

I am no good at all. Marriage does soften a person. I have neither pluck nor patience, and I must own I have



wearied awful for you. But you will never understand that bit of my character. I don't want you when I am ill. At least it's only one half of me that wants you, and I don't like to think of your coming back and not finding me better than when we parted. That is why I would rather be miserable than send for you.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK "TRIBUNE"

At Marseilles, while waiting to occupy the house which he had leased in the suburbs of that city, Stevenson learned that his old friend and kind adviser, Mr. James Payn, with whom he had been intimate as sub-editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* under Mr. Leslie Stephen in the '70's, had been inadvertently represented in the columns of the *New York Tribune* as a plagiarist of R. L. S. In order to put matters right, he at once sent the following letter both to the *Tribune* and to the *London Athenæum* ;—

*Terminus Hotel, Marseilles, October 16, 1882*

SIR,—It has come to my ears that you have lent the authority of your columns to an error.

More than half in pleasantry—and I now think the pleasantry ill-judged—I complained in a note to my *New Arabian Nights* that some one, who shall remain nameless for me, had borrowed the idea of a story from one of mine. As if I had not borrowed the ideas of the half of my own ! As if any one who had written a story ill had a right to complain of any other who should have written it better ! I am indeed thoroughly ashamed of the note, and of the principle which it implies.

But it is no mere abstract penitence which leads me to beg a corner of your paper—it is the desire to defend the honour of a man of letters equally known in America and England, of a man who could afford to lend to me and yet be none the poorer ; and who, if he would so far condescend, has my free permission to borrow from me all that he can find worth borrowing.

Indeed, sir, I am doubly surprised at your correspondent's error. That James Payn should have borrowed from me is already a strange conception. The author of *Lost Sir*

*Massingberd* and *By Proxy* may be trusted to invent his own stories. The author of *A Grape from a Thorn* knows enough, in his own right, of the humorous and pathetic sides of human nature.

But what is far more monstrous—what argues total ignorance of the man in question—is the idea that James Payn could ever have transgressed the limits of professional propriety. I may tell his thousands of readers on your side of the Atlantic that there breathes no man of letters more inspired by kindness and generosity to his brethren of the profession, and, to put an end to any possibility of error, I may be allowed to add that I often have recourse, and that I had recourse once more but a few weeks ago, to the valuable practical help which he makes it his pleasure to extend to younger men.

I send a duplicate of this letter to a London weekly; for the mistake, first set forth in your columns, has already reached England, and my wanderings have made me perhaps last of the persons interested to hear a word of it.—I am, etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

Montpellier, Oct., 1882

I AM a very low horrid fellow. I don't ask you to forgive me, for I am not worth forgiving. I have some more hemorrhage; and Caisso (I suppose quite rightly) won't let me go. He says there is nothing fresh in the lungs; only some little cold, which I seem to have taken steadily. I am now pretty dull as you can fancy. "*La silence et le repos*," said Dr. Caisso.

Silence et repos  
Dit M. Caisso.  
Je dors sur mon dos  
Triste comme un pot.

That is the best fun I can get out of it all in the meantime. Also that when I went to see him yesterday, I



passed a very pleasant afternoon in his waiting-room among the curious meridional peasants, who quarrelled and told their diseases. I made myself very popular there, I don't know how.

I do not ask you to love me any more. I am too much trouble. Besides, I thought myself all over last night ; and, my dear, such rubbish. You cannot put up with such a man.

In one way I see you act on these principles for I hear from you very rarely. Indeed, I suspect you of being very ill. If you are I shall forgive you, my dear, you are provoked to it, I know. If you are not, you might write oftener, I think, to one who is devoted to silence and repose.

Caisso has been here ; he will return again this evening ; he still thinks he will perhaps let me start to-morrow. Whether I shall gain much by starting, I don't know. But at least I'll get away from here. I don't feel the least unhappy, but I don't feel the least happy either. A person who has been a good while married—(to an angel)—chafes at this position. Besides which, it is so dull.

I enclose a thing which should make you laugh.

Caisso tells me he has been besieged by people spitting blood ; five to-day alone. I wish I could hear from you.

TO R. A. M. STEVENSON

*Terminus Hotel, Marseille,  
Saturday [October, 1882]*

MY DEAR BOB,—We have found a house !—at Saint Marcel, Banlieue de Marseille. In a lovely valley between hills part wooded, part white cliffs ; a house of a dining-room, of a fine salon—one side lined with a long divan—three good bedrooms (two of them with dressing-rooms), three small rooms (chambers of *bonne* and *sich*), a large kitchen, a lumber room, many cupboards, a back court, a large, large olive yard, cultivated by a resident *paysan*, a well, a *berceau*, a good deal of rockery, a little pine shrub-

bery, a railway station in front, two lines of omnibus to Marseille.

£48 per annum.

It is called Campagne Defli ! query Campagne Debug ? The Campagne Demosquito goes on here nightly, and is very deadly. Ere we can get installed, we shall be beggared to the door, I see.

I vote for separations ; F.'s arrival here, after our separation, was better fun to me than being married was by far. A separation completed is most valuable property ; worth piles.—Ever your affectionate cousin,

R. L. S.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

*Terminus Hotel, Marseille, le 17th October, 1882*

MY DEAR FATHER,—We grow, every time we see it, more delighted with our house. It is five miles out of Marseilles, in a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills—most mountainous in line—far lovelier, to my eyes, than any Alps. To-day we have been out inventorying ; and though a mistral blew, it was delightful in an open cab, and our house with the windows open was heavenly, soft, dry, sunny southern. I fear there are fleas—it is called Campagne Defli—and I look forward to tons of insecticide being employed.

I have had to write a letter to the *New York Tribune* and the *Athenæum*. Payn was accused of stealing my stories ! I think I have put things handsomely for him.

Just got a servant !!!—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

Our servant is a Muckle Hash of a Weedy !

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Campagne Defli, Saturday, 11th Nov., 1882*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I do think I am better. I have had at last a night without a sweat ; and besides I feel decidedly



less prostrate. I still, as all through this attack, eat and digest well.

You were disappointed that I did not write about your illness. Fanny wrote that very night ; we thought you would come for sure, and hurried up preparing things. Baxter and Henley may have thought my letters cheery. They were both business letters ; and I have scarce written a letter (four in all) for the last ten days ; indeed I was not fit.

À propos of letters, pray do not open my correspondence so recklessly—or at least, not read it. All my correspondents may not be pleased.

Also, pray, send us the allowance ; we are afraid of the boxes coming. The last (Fanny's boxes) cost us £7 odd, which depressed us on the box business. We have a new stove in to-day in the kitchen — £4 — which is to do wonders if it don't explode.

I am unfit to do any work whatever, which always depresses me to the ground. But I keep better spirits than usual. I have my home and my garden, and my hills and my table wine, and my wife—and my dog.

Your affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

The next two months' letters had perforce to consist of little save bulletins of back-going health, and consequent disappointment and incapacity for work.

*Campagne Defli, St. Marcel,  
Banlieue de Marseille, November 13, 1882*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Your delightful letters duly arrived this morning. They were the only good feature of the day, which was not a success. Fanny was in bed—she begged I would not split upon her, she felt so guilty ; but as I believe she is better this evening, and has a good chance to be right again in a day or two, I will disregard her orders. I do not go back, but do not go forward—or not much. It is, in one way, miserable—for I can do no work ; a very

little wood-cutting, the newspapers, and a note about every two days to write, completely exhausts my surplus energy ; even Patience I have to cultivate with parsimony. I see, if I could only get to work, that we could live here with comfort, almost with luxury. Even as it is, we should be able to get through a considerable time of idleness. I like the place immensely, though I have seen so little of it—I have only been once outside the gate since I was here ! It puts me in mind of a summer at Prestonpans and a sickly child you once told me of.

Thirty-two years now finished ! My twenty-ninth was in San Francisco, I remember—rather a bleak birthday. The twenty-eighth was not much better ; but the rest have been usually pleasant days in pleasant circumstances.

Love to you and to my father and to Cummy.

From me and Fanny and Wogg.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*San Marcel, Dec. 23rd, 1882*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Fanny is away into town to meet Sam, who arrives at five o'clock to-morrow. I am dreadfully lonely, I must own, but I must try to write a note, for I don't believe Fanny has written much lately. She is, I think, both out of health and spirits. I will enclose two reviews. *Deacon Brodie* was, I suppose, hissed off the boards yesterday evening at Bradford. But I have not yet heard whether bones were broken.—I keep going up, and then a little down, but on the whole *very slowly* up. I had to give up wood-engraving, chess, latterly even patience, and could read almost nothing but newspapers. It was dull but necessary. I wonder why my father never answered my answer to his. I seem hopelessly hidebound as you see ; nothing comes out of me but chips. I give it up. With love and all good wishes for the season, for this should reach you on Xmas, I think, believe me ever

Your loving son,

R. L. S.



## TO TREVOR HADDON

*Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, Dec. 29th, 1882*

DEAR SIR,—I am glad you sent me your note, I had indeed lost your address, and was half thinking to try the Ringstown one ; but far from being busy, I have been steadily ill. I was but three or four days in London, waiting till one of my friends was able to accompany me, and had neither time nor health to see anybody but some publisher people. Since then I have been worse and better, better and worse, but never able to do any work and for a large part of the time forbidden to write and even to play patience, that last of civilised amusements. In brief, I have been “the sheer hulk” to a degree almost outside of my experience, and I desire all my friends to forgive me my sins of omission this while back. I only wish you were the only one to whom I owe a letter, or many letters.

But you see, at least, you had done nothing to offend me ; and I dare say you will let me have a note from time to time, until we shall have another chance to meet.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

An excellent new year to you, and many of them.

If you chance to see a paragraph in the papers describing my illness, and the “delicacies suitable to my invalid condition” cooked in copper, and the other ridiculous and revolting yarns, pray regard it as a spectral illusion, and pass by.

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON  
TO JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

I interpolate here Mrs. Stevenson's extremely vivid and characteristic account of the weird misadventures that befell the pair during their retreat from St. Marcel in search of a healthier home. Basil Hammond, mentioned towards the end of the letter, was

for many years fellow of, and historical lecturer at, Trinity College, Cambridge.

[*Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, January, 1883*]

MY DEAR MR. SYMONDS,—What must you think of us? I hardly dare write to you. What do you do when people to whom you have been the dearest of friends requite you by acting like fiends? I do hope you heap coals of fire on their heads in the good old Christian sense.

Louis has been very ill again. I hasten to say that he is now better. But I thought at one time he would never be better again. He had continual hemorrhages and became so weak that he was twice insensible on one day, and was for a long time like one dead. At the worst fever broke out in this village, typhus, I think, and all day the death-bells rang, and we could hear the chanting whilst the wretched villagers carried about the dead lying bare to the sun on their coffin-lids, so spreading the contagion through the streets. The evening of the day when Louis was so long insensible the weather changed, becoming very clear and fine and greatly refreshing and reviving him. Then I said if it held good he should start in the morning for Nice and try what a change might do. Just at that time there was not money enough for the two of us, so he had to start alone, though I expected soon to be able to follow him. During the night a peasant-man died in a house in our garden, and in the morning the corpse, hideously swollen in the stomach, was lying on its coffin-lid at our gates. Fortunately it was taken away just before Louis went, and he didn't see it nor hear anything about it until afterwards. I had been back and forth all the morning from the door to the gates, and from the gates to the door, in an agony lest Louis should have to pass it on his way out.

I was to have a despatch from Toulon where Louis was to pass the night, two hours from St. Marcel, and another from Nice, some few hours farther, the next day. I waited one, two, three, four days, and no word came. Neither telegram nor letter. The evening of the fourth day I went to Marseilles and telegraphed to the Toulon and Nice stations and to the bureau of police. I had been



pouring out letters to every place I could think of. The people at Marseilles were very kind and advised me to take no further steps to find my husband. He was certainly dead, they said. It was plain that he stopped at some little station on the road, speechless and dying, and it was now too late to do anything ; I had much better return at once to my friends. " Eet ofen 'appens so," said the Secretary, and " Oh yes, all right, very well," added a Swiss in a sympathetic voice. I waited all night at Marseilles and got no answer, all the next day and got no answer ; then I went back to St. Marcel and there was nothing there. At eight I started on the train with Lloyd who had come for his holidays, but it only took us to Toulon where again I telegraphed. At last I got an answer the next day at noon. I waited at Toulon for the train I had reason to believe Louis travelled by, intending to stop at every station and inquire for him until I got to Nice. Imagine what those days were to me. I never received any of the letters Louis had written to me, and he was reading the first he had received from me when I knocked at his door. A week afterwards I had an answer from the police. Louis was much better : the change and the doctor, who seems very clever, have done wonderful things for him. It was during this first day of waiting that I received your letter. There was a vague comfort in it like a hand offered in the darkness, but I did not read it until long after.

We have had many other wild misadventures, Louis has twice started actually from Nice under a misapprehension. At this moment I believe him to be at Marseilles, stopping at the Hotel du Petit Louvre : I am supposed to be packing here at St. Marcel, afterwards we are to go somewhere, perhaps to the Lake of Geneva. My nerves are so shattered by the terrible suspense I endured that memorable week that I have not been fit to do much. When I was returning from Nice a dreadful old man with a fat wife and a weak granddaughter sat opposite me and plied me with the most extraordinary questions. He began by asking if Lloyd was any connection of mine, and ended I believe by asking my father's maiden name. Another of the questions he put

to me was where Louis wished to be buried, and whether I could afford to have him embalmed when he died. When the train stopped the only other passenger, a quiet man in a corner who looked several times as if he wished to interfere and stop the old man but was too shy, came to me and said that he knew Sidney Colvin and he knew you, and that you were both friends of Louis; and that his name was Basil Hammond, and he wished to stay on a day in Marseilles and help me work off my affairs. I accepted his offer with heartfelt thanks. I was extremely ill next day, but we two went about and arranged about giving up this house and what compensation, and did some things that I could not have managed alone. My French is useful only in domestic economy, and even that, I fear, is very curious and much of it patois. Wasn't that a good fellow, and a kind fellow?—I cannot tell you how grateful I am, words are such feeble things—at least for that purpose. For anger, justifiable wrath, they are all too forcible. It was very bad of me not to write to you, we talked of you so often and thought of you so much, and I always said—"now I will write"—and then somehow I could not. . . .

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Nice, Jan. 5, 1883*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Please continue to address me at St. Marcel so that Fanny may have a sight of the letters; but here I am at Nice—Grand Hotel—a little farther up the river than the old Chauvain—now Cosmopolitan. What a change for twenty years ago! The very river is now bridged over, and gardens and casinos and the like occupy its place. The old Chauvain, I looked into; gone was the gardened court, gone, of course, all the travelling carriages I used to play among with the little Italian girl and the little German boy. Only the Place Masséna still has its arcades and the identical café still remains where I remember seeing my father and Mr.



Abbot sitting in the moonlight, Abbot eating ices ; and there is still the bastioned fort on the hill top over the old Menton road, that I adored beyond anything in stone and lime I ever saw. Twenty years : dear me, I am an old man for all the good I've done. I think the change has done me a great deal of good, however. This huge caravanserai is fearfully dear, but I am still too weary to look for anything else ; I stay mostly in bed, eat and drink of the best I can find, and banish care with all my might.

I am sorry my letter to my father went astray ; it was engineering in part, and so, let us hope, not valuable.

My best wishes to you both and my best love. Auld lang syne is very close to me here.

R. L. S.

### TO CHARLES BAXTER

After his Christmas flight to Marseilles, and thence to Nice, Stevenson began to mend quickly. In this letter to Mr. Baxter he acknowledged the receipt of a specimen proof, set up for their private amusement, of *Brashiana*, the series of burlesque sonnets he had written at Davos in memory of the Edinburgh publican already mentioned. It should be explained that in their correspondence Stevenson and Mr. Baxter were accustomed to keep up an old play of their student days by merging their identities in those of two fictitious personages, Thomson and Johnson, imaginary types of Edinburgh character and ex-elders of the Scottish Kirk.

*Grand Hotel, Nice. 12th January, '83*

DEAR CHARLES,—Thanks for your good letter. It is true, man, God's truth, what ye say about the body Stevison. The deil himsel, it's my belief, couldnae get the soul harled oot o' the creature's wame, or he had seen the hinder end o' they proofs. Ye crack o' Mæcenas, he's nae-body by you ! He gied the lad Horace a rax forrit by all accounts ; but he never gied him proofs like yon. Horace may hae been a better hand at the clink than Stevison—mind, I'm no sayin' 't—but onyway he was never sae weel prentit. Damned, but it's bonny ! Hoo mony pages will there be, think ye ? Stevison maun hae sent ye the feck

o' twenty sangs—fifteen I'se warrant. Weel, that'll can make thretty pages, gin ye were to prent on ae side only, whilk wad be perhaps what a man o' your *great* idees would be ettlin' at, man Johnson. Then there wad be the Pre-face, an' prose ye ken prents oot langer than po'try at the hinder end, for ye hae to say things in't. An' then there'll be a title-page and a dedication and an index wi' the first lines like, and the deil an' a'. Man, it'll be grand. Nae copies to be given to the Liberys.

I am alane myself, in Nice, they ca't, but damned, I think they micht as well ca't Nesty. The Pile-on,\* 's they ca't, 's aboot as big as the river Tay at Perth: and it's rainin' maist like Greenock. Dod, I've seen 's had mair o' what they ca' the I-talian at Muttonhole. I-talian! I haenae seen the sun for eicht and forty hours. Thomason's better, I believe. But the body's fair attenyated. He's doon to seeven stane eleeven, an' he sooks awa' at cod liver ile, till it's a fair disgrace. Ye see he tak's it on a drap brandy; and it's my belief, it's just an excuse for a dram. He an' Stevison gang aboot their lane, maistly; they're company to either, like, an' whiles they'll speak o' Johnson. But *he's* far awa', losh me! Stevison's last book's in a third edeetion; an' it's bein' translated (like the psaulms o' David, nae less) into French; and an eediot they ca' Asher—a kind o' rival of Tauchnitz—is bringin' him oot in a paper book for the Frenchies and the German folk in twa volumes. Sae he's in luck, ye see.—Yours,

THOMSON.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

No date, and presumably from San Marcel or Hyères, in reference to a letter sent originally to Thomas Stevenson and forwarded by him to R. L. S. for translation.

ALL well, dear colleague. Cold as Siberia; I believe colder; but then I never was there. R. L. S.

Translation of enclosed, very literal, for the fun's sake.

\* *Paillon*.



“ I have made acquaintance of the *treatise of Marine Works* which you have published in 1874, and of which you have offered a copy to my conductor at St. Jean de Luz, Mr. Milloy. Your work, so conscientious and so crammed with facts and observations of the most high importance, has interested me in the most lively manner ; and I believe it would be to render a veritable service to the French Engineers, to publish a translation thereof in our tongue. I come then to ask you, Mr., if you consent that this translation be made by me. I should be very grateful to you—in case you kindly authorise me to undertake the work—if you would tell me whether this permission has been already asked by any one else. In fine, Mister, in case you should choose me as translator, I should ask you to refuse the permission to any one else for the space of one year, dating from an epoch which we can fix in the future. That will be for me a precious guarantee against trouble which I might have given myself unusefully.

I hope, Mister, that this letter will become for me the point of departure of an exchange of observations and ideas, to which your great experience in sea works makes me attach the most great price. And—if it is true that similarity of tastes and a common desire to do well form a solid basis for friendship, I do not despair, Mister, to gain some day a share of yours.

Kindly accept, Mister and dear colleague, the expression of my sentiments of perfect esteem.

FRED ANDRÉ.

Address :

Monsieur Frederic André,  
Ingénieur des travaux maritimes  
à Bayonne, Basses Pyrenées, France.”

This is very jolly, isn't it ? Bravo ! Here's to your health, sir, in a dram. Kindly accept, Mister and dear Colleague, the expression of my sentiments of ecstatic congratulation.

## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Stevenson here narrates in his own fashion by what generalship he at last got rid of the Campagne Defli without having to pay compensation as his wife expected.

*Hotel du Petit Louvre, Marseille, 15 Feb., 1883*

DEAR SIR,—This is to intimate to you that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson were yesterday safely delivered of a

Campagne.

The parents are both doing much better than could be expected ; particularly the dear papa.

There, Colvin, I did it this time. Huge success. The propriétaires were scattered like chaff. If it had not been the agent, may Israel now say, if it had not been the agent who was on our side ! But I made the agent march ! I threatened law ; I was Immense—what do I say ?—Immeasurable. The agent, however, behaved well and is a fairly honest little one-eared, white-eyed tom-cat of an opera-going gold-hunter. The propriétaire *non est inventa* ; we countermarched her, got in valuers ; and in place of a hundred francs in her pocket, she got nothing, and I paid one silver biscuit ! It *might* go further but I am convinced will not, and anyway, I fear not the consequences.

The weather is incredible ; my heart sings ; my health satisfies even my wife. I did jolly well right to come after all and she now admits it. For she broke down as I knew she would, and I from here, without passing a night at the Defli, though with a cruel effusion of coach-hires, took up the wondrous tale and steered the ship through. I now sit crowned with laurel and literally exulting in kudos. The affair has been better managed than our last two winterings.

—I am yours,

BRABAZON DRUM.



## TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

The verses referred to in the following are those of the *Child's Garden*.

[Nice, February, 1883]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—You must think, and quite justly, that I am one of the meanest rogues in creation. But though I do not write (which is a thing I hate), it by no means follows that people are out of my mind. It is natural that I should always think more or less about you, and still more natural that I should think of you when I went back to Nice. But the real reason why you have been more in my mind than usual is because of some little verses that I have been writing, and that I mean to make a book of ; and the real reason of this letter (although I ought to have written to you anyway) is that I have just seen that the book in question must be dedicated to

ALISON CUNNINGHAM,

the only person who will really understand it. I don't know when it may be ready, for it has to be illustrated, but I hope in the meantime you may like the idea of what is to be ; and when the time comes, I shall try to make the dedication as pretty as I can make it. Of course, this is only a flourish, like taking off one's hat ; but still, a person who has taken the trouble to write things does not dedicate them to any one without meaning it ; and you must just try to take this dedication in place of a great many things that I might have said, and that I ought to have done, to prove that I am not altogether unconscious of the great debt of gratitude I owe you. This little book, which is all about my childhood, should indeed go to no other person but you, who did so much to make that childhood happy.

Do you know, we came very near sending for you this winter. If we had not had news that you were ill too, I almost believe we should have done so, we were so much in trouble.

I am now very well ; but my wife has had a very very bad spell, through overwork and anxiety, when I was *lost* ! I suppose you heard of that. She sends you her love, and hopes you will write to her, though she no more than I deserves it. She would add a word herself, but she is too played out. I am, ever your old boy,

R. L. S.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson was by this time beginning to send home some of the MS. of the *Child's Garden*, the title of which had not yet been settled. The pieces as first numbered are in a different order from that afterwards adopted, but the reader will easily identify the references. No illustrated edition was as a matter of fact produced until 1896.

[Nice, March, 1883]

MY DEAR LAD,—This is to announce to you the MS. of Nursery Verses, now numbering XLVIII pieces or 599 verses, which, of course, one might augment *ad infinitum*.

But here is my notion to make all clear.

I do not want a big ugly quarto ; my soul sickens at the look of a quarto. I want a refined octavo, not large—not *larger* than the *Donkey Book*, at any price.

I think the full page might hold four verses of four lines, that is to say, counting their blanks at two, of twenty-two lines in height. The first page of each number would only hold two verses or ten lines, the title being low down. At this rate, we should have seventy-eight or eighty pages of letterpress.

The designs should not be in the text, but facing the poem ; so that if the artist liked, he might give two pages of design to every poem that turned the leaf, *i.e.* longer than eight lines, *i.e.* to twenty-eight out of the forty-six. I should say he would not use this privilege (?) above five times, and some he might scorn to illustrate at all, so we may say fifty drawings. I shall come to the drawings next.



But now you see my book of the thickness, since the drawings count two pages, of 180 pages ; and since the paper will perhaps be thicker, of near two hundred by bulk. It is bound in a quiet green with the words in thin gilt. Its shape is a slender tall octavo. And it sells for the publisher's fancy, and it will be a darling to look at ; in short, it would be like one of the original Heine books in type and spacing.

Now for the pictures. I take another sheet and begin to jot notes for them when my imagination serves : I will run through the book, writing when I have an idea. There, I have jotted enough to give the artist a notion. Of course, I don't do more than contribute ideas, but I will be happy to help in any and every way. I may as well add another idea ; when the artist finds nothing much to illustrate, a good drawing of any *object* mentioned in the text, were it only a loaf of bread or a candlestick, is a most delightful thing to a young child. I remember this keenly.

Of course, if the artist insists on a larger form, I must, I suppose, bow my head. But my idea I am convinced is the best, and would make the book truly, not fashionably pretty.

I forgot to mention that I shall have a dedication ; I am going to dedicate 'em to Cummy ; it will please her, and lighten a little my burthen of ingratitude. A low affair is the Nurse business.

I will add no more to this lest you should want to communicate with the artist ; try another sheet. I wonder how many I'll keep wandering to.

O I forgot. As for the title, I think "Nursery Verses" the best. Poetry is not the strong point of the text, and I shrink from any title that might seem to claim that quality ; otherwise we might have "Nursery Muses" or "New Songs of Innocence" (but that were a blasphemy), or "Rimes of Innocence" : the last not bad, or—an idea—"The Jews' Harp," or—now I have it—"The Penny Whistle."

## THE PENNY WHISTLE :

## NURSERY VERSES

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY ———

And here we have an excellent frontispiece, of a party playing on a P. W. to a little ring of dancing children.

THE PENNY WHISTLE

is the name for me.

Fool ! this is all wrong, here is the true name :—

PENNY WHISTLES

FOR SMALL WHISTLERS.

The second title is queried, it is perhaps better, as simply PENNY WHISTLES.

Nor you, O Penny Whistler, grudge  
That I your instrument debase :  
By worse performers still we judge,  
And give that fife a second place !

Crossed penny whistles on the cover, or else a sheaf of 'em.

## SUGGESTIONS

iv. The procession—the child running behind it. The procession tailing off through the gates of a cloudy city.

ix. *Foreign Lands*.—This will, I think want two plates—the child climbing, his first glimpse over the garden wall, with what he sees—the trees shooting higher and higher like the beanstalk, and the view widening. The river slipping in. The road arriving in Fairyland.

x. *Windy Nights*.—The child in bed listening—the horseman galloping.



xii. The child helplessly watching his ship—then he gets smaller, and the doll joyfully comes alive—the pair landing on the island—the ship's deck with the doll steering and the child firing the penny cannon. Query two plates? The doll should never come properly alive.

xv. Building of the ship—storing her—Navigation—Tom's accident, the other child paying no attention.

xxxI. *The Wind*.—I sent you my notion of already.

xxxvii. *Foreign Children*.—The foreign types dancing in a jing-a-ring, with the English child pushing in the middle. The foreign children looking at and showing each other marvels. The English child at the leese of a roast of beef. The English child sitting thinking with his picture-books all round him, and the jing-a-ring of the foreign children in miniature dancing over the picture-books.

xxxix. Dear artist, can you do me that?

xlII. The child being started off—the bed sailing, curtains and all, upon the sea—the child waking and finding himself at home; the corner of toilette might be worked in to look like the pier.

xlVII. The lighted part of the room, to be carefully distinguished from my child's dark hunting grounds. A shaded lamp.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Hotel des Îles d'Or, Hyères, Var*  
March 2 [1883]

MY DEAR MOTHER,—It must be at least a fortnight since we have had a scratch of a pen from you; and if it had not been for Cummy's letter, I should have feared you were worse again: as it is, I hope we shall hear from you to-day or to-morrow at latest.

*Health*.—Our news is good: Fanny never got so bad as we feared, and we hope now that this attack may pass off in threatenings. I am greatly better, have gained flesh, strength, spirits; eat well, walk a good deal, and do some work without fatigue. I am off the sick list.

*Lodging.*—We have found a house up the hill, close to the town, an excellent place though very, very little. If I can get the landlord to agree to let us take it by the month just now, and let our month's rent count for the year in case we take it on, you may expect to hear we are again installed, and to receive a letter dated thus :—

La Solitude,  
Hyères-les-Palmiers,  
Var.

If the man won't agree to that, of course I must just give it up, as the house would be dear enough anyway at 2000 f. However, I hope we may get it, as it is healthy, cheerful, and close to shops, and society, and civilisation. The garden, which is above, is lovely, and will be cool in summer. There are two rooms below with a kitchen, and four rooms above, all told.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

"Cassandra" was a nickname of the elder Mr. Stevenson for his daughter-in-law. The scheme of a play to be founded on *Great Expectations* was one of a hundred formed in these days and afterwards given up.

*Hotel des Îles d'Or, but my address will be Chalet  
la Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France  
March 17, 1883*

DEAR SIR,—Your undated favour from Eastbourne came to hand in course of post, and I now hasten to acknowledge its receipt. We must ask you in future, for the convenience of our business arrangements, to struggle with and tread below your feet this most unsatisfactory and uncommercial habit. Our Mr. Cassandra is better ; our Mr. Wogg expresses himself dissatisfied with our new place of business ; when left alone in the front shop, he bawled like a parrot ; it is supposed the offices are haunted.

To turn to the matter of your letter, your remarks on



*Great Expectations* are very good. We have both re-read it this winter, and I, in a manner, twice. The object being a play ; the play, in its rough outline, I now see : and it is extraordinary how much of Dickens had to be discarded as unhuman, impossible, and ineffective : all that really remains is the loan of a file (but from a grown-up young man who knows what he was doing, and to a convict who, although he does not know it is his father—the father knows it is his son), and the fact of the convict-father's return and disclosure of himself to the son whom he has made rich. Everything else has been thrown aside ; and the position has had to be explained by a prologue which is pretty strong. I have great hopes of this piece, which is very amiable and, in places, very strong indeed : but it was curious how Dickens had to be rolled away ; he had made his story turn on such improbabilities, such fantastic trifles, not on a good human basis, such as I recognised. You are right about the casts, they were a capital idea ; a good description of them at first, and then afterwards, say second, for the lawyer to have illustrated points out of the history of the originals, dusting the particular bust—that was all the development the thing would bear. Dickens killed them. The only really well *executed* scenes are the riverside ones ; the escape in particular is excellent ; and I may add, the capture of the two convicts at the beginning. Miss Havisham is, probably, the worst thing in human fiction. But Wemmick I like ; and I like Trabb's boy ; and Mr. Wopsle as Hamlet is splendid.

The weather here is greatly improved, and I hope in three days to be in the chalet. That is, if I get some money to float me there.

I hope you are all right again, and will keep better. The month of March is past its mid career ; it must soon begin to turn toward the lamb ; here it has already begun to do so ; and I hope milder weather will pick you up. Wogg has eaten a forpet of rice and milk, his beard is streaming, his eyes wild. I am besieged by demands of work from America.

The £50 has just arrived ; many thanks : I am now at

ease.—Ever your affectionate son, *pro* Cassandra, Wogg and Co.,

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, April, 1883*]

MY head is singing with *Otto* ; for the first two weeks I wrote and revised and only finished IV chapters : last week, I have just drafted straight ahead, and I have just finished Chapter XI. It will want a heap of oversight and much will not stand, but the pace is good ; about 28 *Cornhill* pp. drafted in seven days, and almost all of it dialogue—indeed I may say all, for I have dismissed the rest very summarily in the draft : one can always tickle at that. At the same rate, the draft should be finished in ten days more ; and then I shall have the pleasure of beginning again at the beginning. Ah damned job ! I have no idea whether or not *Otto* will be good. It is all pitched pretty high and stilted ; almost like the Arabs, at that ; but of course there is love-making in *Otto*, and indeed a good deal of it. I sometimes feel very weary ; but the thing travels—and I like it when I am at it.

Remember me kindly to all.—Your ex-contributor,  
R. L. S.

TO MRS. SITWELL

His correspondent had at his request been writing and despatching to him fair copies of the various sets of verses for the *Child's Garden* (as the collection was ultimately called) which he had been from time to time sending home.

*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [April, 1883]*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am one of the lowest of the—but that's understood. I received the copy, excellently written, with I think only one slip from first to last. I have struck out two, and added five or six ; so they now number forty-five ; when they are fifty, they shall out on the world. I



have not written a letter for a cruel time ; I have been, and am, so busy, drafting a long story (for me, I mean), about a hundred *Cornhill* pages, or say about as long as the Donkey book : *Prince Otto* it is called, and is, at the present hour, a sore burthen but a hopeful. If I had him all drafted, I should whistle and sing. But no : then I'll have to re-write him ; and then there will be the publishers, alas ! But some time or other, I shall whistle and sing, I make no doubt.

I am going to make a fortune, it has not yet begun, for I am not yet clear of debt ; but as soon as I can, I begin upon the fortune. I shall begin it with a half-penny, and it shall end with horses and yachts and all the fun of the fair. This is the first real grey hair in my character : rapacity has begun to show, the greed of the protuberant guttler. Well, doubtless, when the hour strikes, we must all guttle and protube. But it comes hard on one who was always so willow-slender and as careless as the daisies.

Truly I am in excellent spirits. I have crushed through a financial crisis ; Fanny is much better ; I am in excellent health, and work from four to five hours a day—from one to two above my average, that is ; and we all dwell together and make fortunes in the loveliest house you ever saw, with a garden like a fairy story, and a view like a classical landscape.

Little ? Well, it is not large. And when you come to see us, you will probably have to bed at the hotel, which is hard by. But it is Eden, madam, Eden and Beulah and the Delectable Mountains and Eldorado and the Hesperidean Isles and Bimini.\*

We both look forward, my dear friend, with the greatest eagerness to have you here. It seems it is not to be this season ; but I appoint you with an appointment for next season. You cannot see us else : remember that. Till my health has grown solid like an oak-tree, till my fortune begins really to spread its boughs like the same monarch of the woods (and the acorn, ay de mi ! is not yet planted), I expect to be a prisoner among the palms.

\* The name of the Delectable Land in one of Heine's *Lieder*.

Yes, it is like old times to be writing you from the Riviera, and after all that has come and gone, who can predict anything? How fortune tumbles men about! Yet I have not found that they change their friends, thank God.

Both of our loves to your sister and yourself. As for me, if I am here and happy, I know to whom I owe it; I know who made my way for me in life, if that were all, and I remain, with love, your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

"Gilder" in the following is of course the late R. W. Gilder, for many years the admirable editor of the *Century Magazine*.

*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [April, 1883]*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I am very guilty; I should have written to you long ago; and now, though it must be done, I am so stupid that I can only boldly recapitulate. A phrase of three members is the outside of my syntax.

First, I liked the *Rover* better than any of your other verse. I believe you are right, and can make stories in verse. The last two stanzas and one or two in the beginning—but the two last above all—I thought excellent. I suggest a pursuit of the vein. If you want a good story to treat, get the *Memoirs of the Chevalier Johnstone*, and do his passage of the Tay; it would be excellent: the dinner in the field, the woman he has to follow, the dragoons, the timid boatmen, the brave lasses. It would go like a charm; look at it, and you will say you owe me one.

Second, Gilder asking me for fiction, I suddenly took a great resolve, and have packed off to him my new work, *The Silverado Squatters*. I do not for a moment suppose he will take it; but pray say all the good words you can for it. I should be awfully glad to get it taken. But if it does not mean dibbs at once, I shall be ruined for life. Pray write soon and beg Gilder your prettiest for a poor gentleman in pecuniary sloughs.

Fourth, next time I am supposed to be at death's door,



write to me like a Christian, and let not your correspondence attend on business.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

*P.S.*—I see I have led you to conceive the *Squatters* are fiction. They are not, alas !

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Chalet la Solitude, May 5 [1883]*

MY DEAREST PEOPLE,—I have had a great piece of news. There has been offered for *Treasure Island*—how much do you suppose ? I believe it would be an excellent jest to keep the answer till my next letter. For two cents I would do so. Shall I ? Anyway, I'll turn the page first. No—well—A hundred pounds, all alive, O ! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful ? Add that I have now finished, in draft, the fifteenth chapter of my novel, and have only five before me, and you will see what cause of gratitude I have.

The weather, to look at the per contra sheet, continues vomitable ; and Fanny is quite out of sorts. But, really, with such cause of gladness, I have not the heart to be dispirited by anything. My child's verse book is finished, dedication and all, and out of my hands—you may tell Cummy ; *Silverado* is done, too, and cast upon the waters ; and this novel so near completion, it does look as if I should support myself without trouble in the future. If I have only health, I can, I thank God. It is dreadful to be a great, big man, and not be able to buy bread.

O that this may last !

I have to-day paid my rent for half the year, till the middle of September, and got my lease : why they have been so long, I know not.

I wish you all sorts of good things.

When is our marriage day ?—Your loving and ecstatic son,

TREASURE EILAN.

It has been for me a *Treasure Island* verily.

## TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Hyères, May 8, 1883*

MY DEAR PEOPLE—I was disgusted to hear my father was not so well. I have a most troubled existence of work and business. But the work goes well, which is the great affair. I meant to have written a most delightful letter; too tired, however, and must stop. Perhaps I'll find time to add to it ere post.

I have returned refreshed from eating, but have little time, as Lloyd will go soon with the letters on his way to his tutor, Louis Robert (! ! ! !), with whom he learns Latin in French, and French, I suppose, in Latin, which seems to me a capital education. He, Lloyd, is a great bicycler already, and has been long distances; he is most new-fangled over his instrument, and does not willingly converse on other subjects.

Our lovely garden is a prey to snails; I have gathered about a bushel, which, not having the heart to slay, I steal forth withal and deposit near my neighbour's garden wall. As a case of casuistry, this presents many points of interest. I loathe the snails, but from loathing to actual butchery, trucidation of multitudes, there is still a step that I hesitate to take. What, then, to do with them? My neighbour's vineyard, pardy! It is a rich, villa, pleasure-garden of course; if it were a peasant's patch, the snails, I suppose, would have to perish.

The weather these last three days has been much better, though it is still windy and unkind. I keep splendidly well, and am cruelly busy, with mighty little time even for a walk. And to write at all, under such pressure, must be held to lean to virtue's side.

My financial prospects are shining. O if the health will hold, I should easily support myself.—Your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.



## TO EDMUND GOSSE

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var*  
[May 20, 1883]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I enclose the receipt and the corrections. As for your letter and Gilder's, I must take an hour or so to think ; the matter much importing—to me. The £40 was a heavenly thing.

I send the MS. by Henley, because he acts for me in all matters, and had the thing, like all my other books, in his detention. He is my unpaid agent—an admirable arrangement for me, and one that has rather more than doubled my income on the spot.

If I have been long silent, think how long you were so and blush, sir, blush.

I was rendered unwell by the arrival of your cheque, and, like Pepys, "my hand still shakes to write of it." To this grateful emotion, and not to D. T., please attribute the raggedness of my hand.

This year I shall be able to live and keep my family on my own earnings, and that in spite of eight months and more of perfect idleness at the end of last and beginning of this. It is a sweet thought.

This spot our garden and our view, are sub-celestial. I sing daily with my Bunyan, that great bard,

"I dwell already the next door to Heaven !"

If you could see my roses, and my aloes, and my fig-marigolds, and my olives, and my view over a plain, and my view of certain mountains as graceful as Apollo, as severe as Zeus, you would not think the phrase exaggerated.

It is blowing to-day a *hot* mistral, which is the devil or a near connection of his.

This is to catch the post.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON.

## TO EDMUND GOSSE

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers,  
Var, France, May 21, 1883*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—The night giveth advice, generally bad advice ; but I have taken it. And I have written direct to Gilder to tell him to keep the book \* back and go on with it in November at his leisure. I do not know if this will come in time ; if it doesn't, of course things will go on in the way proposed. The £40, or, as I prefer to put it, the 1000 francs, has been such a piercing sun-ray as my whole grey life is gilt withal. On the back of it I can endure. If these good days of Longman and the Century only last, it will be a very green world, this that we dwell in and that philosophers miscall. I have no taste for that philosophy ; give me large sums paid on the receipt of the MS. and copyright reserved, and what do I care about the non-bëent ? Only I know it can't last. The devil always has an imp or two in every house, and my imps are getting lively. The good lady, the dear, kind lady, the sweet, excellent lady, Nemesis, whom alone I adore, has fixed her wooden eye upon me. I fall prone ; spare me, Mother Nemesis ! But catch her !

I must now go to bed ; for I have had a whoreson influenza cold, and have to lie down all day, and get up only to meals and the delights, June delights, of business correspondence.

You said nothing about my subject for a poem. Don't you like it ? My own fishy eye has been fixed on it for prose, but I believe it could be thrown out finely in verse, and hence I resign and pass the hand. Twig the compliment ?—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## TO W. E. HENLEY

"Tushery" had been a name in use between Stevenson and Mr. Henley for romances of the *Ivanhoe* type. He now applies it to

\* *Silverado Squatters.*



his own tale of the Wars of the Roses, *The Black Arrow*, written for Mr. Henderson's *Young Folks*, of which the office was in Red Lion Square.

[Hyères, May, 1883]

. . . THE influenza has busted me a good deal ; I have no spring, and am headachy. So, as my good Red Lion Counter begged me for another Butcher's Boy—I turned me to—what thinkest 'ou ? to Tushery, by the mass ! Ay, friend, a whole tale of tushery. And every tusher tushes me so free, that may I be tushed if the whole thing is worth a tush. *The Black Arrow : A Tale of Tunstall Forest* is his name : tush ! a poor thing !

Will *Treasure Island* proofs be coming soon, think you ?

I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver in *Treasure Island*. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you ; but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you.

*Otto* is, as you say, not a thing to extend my public on. It is queer and a little, little bit free ; and some of the parties are immoral ; and the whole thing is not a romance, nor yet a comedy ; nor yet a romantic comedy ; but a kind of preparation of some of the elements of all three in a glass jar. I think it is not without merit, but I am not always on the level of my argument, and some parts are false, and much of the rest is thin ; it is more a triumph for myself than anything else ; for I see, beyond it, better stuff. I have nine chapters ready, or almost ready, for press. My feeling would be to get it placed anywhere for as much as could be got for it, and rather in the shadow, till one saw the look of it in print.—Ever yours,

PRETTY SICK.

TO W. E. HENLEY

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, May, 1883*

MY DEAR LAD,—The books came some time since, but I have not had the pluck to answer : a shower of small

troubles having fallen in, or troubles that may be very large.

I have had to incur a huge vague debt for cleaning sewers ; our house was (of course) riddled with hidden cesspools, but that was infallible. I have the fever, and feel the duty to work very heavy on me at times ; yet go it must. I have had to leave *Fontainebleau*, when three hours would finish it, and go full-tilt at tushery for a while. But it will come soon.

I think I can give you a good article on Hokusai ; but that is for afterwards ; *Fontainebleau* is first in hand.

By the way, my view is to give the *Penny Whistles* to Crane or Greenaway. But Crane, I think, is likeliest : he is a fellow who, at least, always does his best.

Shall I ever have money enough to write a play ?

O dire necessity !

A word in your ear : I don't like trying to support myself. I hate the strain and the anxiety ; and when unexpected expenses are foisted on me, I feel the world is playing with false dice.—Now I must Tush, adieu.

### AN ACHING, FEVERED, PENNY-JOURNALIST

A lytle Jape of TUSHERIE

By A. Tusher.

The pleasant river gushes  
Among the meadows green ;  
At home the author tushes ;  
For him it flows unseen.

The Birds among the Būshes  
May wanton on the spray ;  
But vain for him who tushes  
The brightness of the day !

The frog among the rushes  
Sits singing in the blue.  
By'r la'kin ! but these tushes  
Are wearisome to do !

The task entirely crushes  
The spirit of the bard :  
God pity him who tushes—  
His task is very hard.



The filthy gutter slushes,  
The clouds are full of rain,  
But doomed is he who tushes  
To tush and tush again.

At morn with his hair-brushes,  
Still "tush" he says, and weeps;  
At night again he tushes,  
And tushes till he sleeps.

And when at length he pushes  
Beyond the river dark—  
'Las, to the man who tushes,  
"Tush" shall be God's remark!

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May, 1883*]

COLVIN,—The attempt to correspond with you is vain. Well, well, then so be it. I will from time to time write you an insulting letter, brief but monstrous harsh. I regard you in the light of a genteel impostor. Your name figures in the papers but never to a piece of letter-paper: well, well.

News. I am well: Fanny been ill but better: *Otto* about three-quarters done; *Silverado* proofs a terrible job—it is a most unequal work—new wine in old bottles—large rats, small bottles\*: as usual, penniless—O but penniless: still, with four articles in hand (say £35) and the £100 for *Silverado* imminent, not hopeless.

Why am I so penniless, ever, ever penniless, ever, ever penny-penny-penniless and dry?

The birds upon the thorn,

The poppies in the corn,

They surely are more fortunate or prudenter than I!

In Arabia, everybody is called the Father of something

\* The allusion is to a specimen I had been used to hear quoted of the Duke of Wellington's table-talk in his latter years. He had said that musk-rats were sometimes kept alive in bottles in India. Curate, or other meek dependent: "I presume, your Grace, they are small rats and large bottles." His Grace: "No, large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles."

or other for convenience or insult's sake. Thus you are "the Father of Prints," or of "Bummkopferies," or "Father of Unanswered Correspondence." They would instantly dub Henley "the Father of Wooden Legs"; me they would denominate the "Father of Bones," and Matthew Arnold "the Father of Eyeglasses."

I have accepted most of the excisions. Proposed titles—

The Innocent Muse.

A Child's Garden of Rhymes.

Songs of the Playroom.

Nursery Songs.

I like the first ?

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

*La Solitude, Hyères, May or June, 1883*

DEAR LAD,—Snatches in return for yours ; for this little once, I'm well to windward of you.

Seventeen chapters of *Otto* are now drafted, and finding I was working through my voice and getting screechy, I have turned back again to rewrite the earlier part. It has, I do believe, some merit : of what order, of course, I am the last to know ; and, triumph of triumphs, my wife—my wife who hates and loathes and slates my women—admits a great part of my Countess to be on the spot.

Yes, I could borrow, but it is the joy of being before the public, for once. Really, £100 is a sight more than *Treasure Island* is worth.

The reason of my *dèche* ? Well, if you begin one house, have to desert it, begin another, and are eight months without doing any work, you will be in a *dèche* too. I am not in a *dèche*, however ; *distinguo*—I would fain distinguish ; I am rather a swell, but *not solvent*. At a touch the edifice, *ædificium*, might collapse. If my creditors began to babble around me, I would sink with a slow strain of music



into the crimson west. The difficulty in my elegant villa is to find oil, *oleum*, for the dam axles. But I've paid my rent until September ; and beyond the chemist, the grocer, the baker, the doctor, the gardener, Lloyd's teacher, and the great chief creditor Death, I can snap my fingers at all men. Why will people spring bills on you ? I try to make 'em charge me at the moment ; they won't, the money goes, the debt remains.—The Required Play is in the *Merry Men*.  
Q. E. F.

I thus render honour to your *flair* ; it came on me of a clap ; I do not see it yet beyond a kind of sunset glory. But it's there : passion, romance, the picturesque, involved : startling, simple, horrid : a sea-pink in sea-froth ! *S'agit de la désenterrer*. " Help ! " cries a buried masterpiece.

Once I see my way to the year's end, clear, I turn to plays ; till then I grind at letters ; finish *Otto* ; write, say, a couple of my *Traveller's Tales* ; and then, if all my ships come home, I will attack the drama in earnest. I cannot mix the skeins. Thus, though I'm morally sure there is a play in *Otto*, I dare not look for it : I shoot straight at the story.

As a story, a comedy, I think *Otto* very well constructed ; the echoes are very good, all the sentiments change round, and the points of view are continually, and, I think (if you please), happily contrasted. None of it is exactly funny, but some of it is smiling.

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

The verses alluded to are some of those afterwards collected in *Underwoods*.

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May or June, 1883*]

DEAR HENLEY,—You may be surprised to hear that I am now a great writer of verses ; that is, however, so. I am the mania now like my betters, and faith, if I live till I am forty, I shall have a book of rhymes like Pollock, Goode, or whom you please. Really, I have begun to learn

some of the rudiments of that trade, and have written three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling. A kind of prose Herrick, divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard. But I like it.

R. L. S.

### TO MR. SIMONEAU

This friend was the keeper of the inn and restaurant where Stevenson had boarded at Monterey in the autumn of 1879. In writing French, as will be seen, Stevenson's grip both of idiom and grammar was apt to be shaky.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, May or June, 1883*]

MON CHER ET BON SIMONEAU,—J'ai commencé plusieurs fois de vous écrire ; et voilà-t-il pas qu'un empêchement quelconque est arrivé toujours. La lettre ne part pas ; et je vous laisse toujours dans le droit de soupçonner mon cœur. Mon bon ami, ne pensez pas que je vous ai oublié ou que je vous oublierai jamais. Il n'en est de rien. Votre bon souvenir me tient de bien près, et je le garderai jusqu'à la mort.

J'ai failli mourir de bien près ; mais me voici bien rétabli, bien que toujours un peu chétif et malingre. J'habite, comme vous voyez, la France. Je travaille beaucoup, et je commence à ne pas être le dernier ; déjà on me dispute ce que j'écris, et je n'ai pas à me plaindre de ce que l'on appelle les honoraires. Me voici alors très affairé, très heureux dans mon ménage, gâté par ma femme, habitant la plus petite maisonnette dans le plus beau jardin du monde, et voyant de mes fenêtres la mer, les isles d'Hyères, et les belles collines, montagnes et forts de Toulon.

Et vous, mon très cher ami ? Comment cela va-t-il ? Comment vous portez-vous ? Comment va le commerce ? Comment aimez vous le pays ? et l'enfant ? et la femme ? Et enfin toutes les questions possibles. Ecrivez-moi donc bien vite, cher Simoneau. Et quant à moi, je vous



promets que vous entendrez bien vite parler de moi ; je vous *récrirai* sous peu, et je vous enverrai un de mes livres. Ceci n'est qu'un serrement de main, *from the bottom of my heart, dear and kind old man.*—Your friend,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

The "new dictionary" means, of course, the great Oxford Dictionary of the English Language, edited by Dr. J. A. H. Murray, which had been appearing in instalments since 1878.

*La Solitude, Hyères [June, 1883]*

DEAR LAD,—I was delighted to hear the good news about —. Bravo, he goes uphill fast. Let him beware of vanity, and he will go higher ; let him be still discontented, and let him (if it might be) see the merits and not the faults of his rivals, and he may swarm at last to the top-gallant. There is no other way. Admiration is the only road to excellence ; and the critical spirit kills, but envy and injustice are putrefaction on its feet.

Thus far the moralist. The eager author now begs to know whether you may have got the other Whistles, and whether a fresh proof is to be taken ; also whether in that case the dedication should not be printed therewith ; *Bulk Delights Publishers* (original aphorism ; to be said sixteen times in succession as a test of sobriety).

Your wild and ravening commands were received ; but cannot be obeyed. And anyway, I do assure you I am getting better every day ; and if the weather would but turn, I should soon be observed to walk in hornpipes. Truly I am on the mend. I am still very careful. I have the new dictionary ; a joy, a thing of beauty, and—bulk. I shall be raked i' the mools before it's finished ; that is the only pity ; but meanwhile I sing.

I beg to inform you that I, Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Brashiana* and other works, am merely beginning to commence to prepare to make a first start at trying to understand my profession. O the height and depth of

novelty and worth in any art ! and O that I am privileged to swim and shoulder through such oceans ! Could one get out of sight of land—all in the blue ! Alas not, being anchored here in flesh, and the bonds of logic being still about us.

But what a great space and a great air there is in these small shallows where alone we venture ! and how new each sight, squall, calm, or sunrise ! An art is a fine fortune, a palace in a park, a band of music, health, and physical beauty ; all but love—to any worthy practiser. I sleep upon my art for a pillow ; I waken in my art ; I am unready for death, because I hate to leave it. I love my wife, I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her ; but while I can conceive my being widowed, I refuse the offering of life without my art. I *am* not but in my art ; it is me ; I am the body of it merely.

And yet I produce nothing, am the author of *Brashiana* and other works : tiddy-iddity—as if the works one wrote were anything but 'prentice's experiments. Dear reader, I deceive you with husks, the real works and all the pleasure are still mine and incommunicable. After this break in my work, beginning to return to it, as from light sleep, I wax exclamatory, as you see.

Sursum Corda :

Heave ahead :

Here's luck.

Art and Blue Heaven,

April and God's Larks.

Green reeds and the sky-scattering river.

A stately music.

Enter God.

R. L. S.

Ay, but you know, until a man can write that "Enter God," he has made no art ! None ! Come, let us take counsel together and make some !



## TO THOMAS STEVENSON

"Clark" in the following letter is the famous physician Sir Andrew Clark: the "delicious rhapsody of anger" mentioned as enclosed is not forthcoming.

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers,  
Var, June 15th, 1883*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Your letter telling me of Clark's better opinion was very welcome. I did not like your getting thin, until I began to remember that it is natural at a certain age. I am not particularly brilliant to-day and cannot get off much in the way of a letter. I am working hard, without much difficulty; but I can do little else. I find rather a despair at looking forward. To be condemned to produce till death do set me free, came upon me with a horror; and I was nearly sick of my trade. Only the next moment, I remembered if I had been in any other, I should most likely be able to do nothing at all; and this consoled me.

I have got two editions, one at a dollar and one at ten-pence, of the *Arabian Nights*, and a really handsome dollar edition of the *Inland Voyage*, sent to me from the States by semi-repentant publishers. Also this delicious rhapsody of anger which I enclose. I shall give over the books of my mother when we meet, though with a grudge. My mother will have to bring the review book; I pine for it. I also inclose another review; so whatever you think of my letter, you cannot say I have not sent you reading. Fanny is fairly well; and Lloyd, who was peepy, is better.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

## TO TREVOR HADDON

During the height of the Provençal summer, for July and part of August, Stevenson went with his wife to the Baths of Royat in Auvergne (travelling necessarily by way of Clermont-Ferrand). His parents joined them at Royat for part of their visit. This and possibly the next following letters were written during the

trip. The news here referred to was that his correspondent had won a scholarship at the Slade School.

*La Solitude, Hyères. But just now writing from  
Clermont-Ferrand, July 5, 1883*

DEAR MR. HADDON,—Your note with its piece of excellent news duly reached me. I am delighted to hear of your success : selfishly so ; for it is pleasant to see that one whom I suppose I may call an admirer is no fool. I wish you more and more prosperity, and to be devoted to your art. An art is the very gist of life ; it grows with you ; you will never weary of an art at which you fervently and superstitiously labour. Superstitiously : I mean, think more of it than it deserves ; be blind to its faults, as with a wife or father ; forget the world in a technical trifle. The world is very serious ; art is the cure of that, and must be taken very lightly ; but to take art lightly, you must first be stupidly owlshly in earnest over it. When I made Casimir say “ Tiens ” at the end, I made a blunder. I thought it was what Casimir would have said and I put it down. As your question shows, it should have been left out. It was a “ patch ” of realism, and an anti-climax. Beware of realism ; it is the devil : ’tis one of the means of art, and now they make it the end ! And such is the farce of the age in which a man lives, that we all, even those of us who most detest it, sin by realism.

Notes for the student of any art.

1. Keep an intelligent eye upon *all* the others. It is only by doing so that you come to see what Art is : Art is the end common to them all, it is none of the points by which they differ.

2. In this age beware of realism.

3. In your own art, bow your head over technique. Think of technique when you rise and when you go to bed. Forget purposes in the meanwhile ; get to love technical processes ; to glory in technical successes ; get to see the world entirely through technical spectacles, to see it entirely in terms of what you can do. Then when you have anything to say, the language will be apt and copious.

My health is better.



I have no photograph just now ; but when I get one you shall have a copy. It will not be like me ; sometimes I turn out a capital, fresh bank clerk ; once I came out the image of Runjeet Singh ; again the treacherous sun has fixed me in the character of a travelling evangelist.

It's quite a lottery ; but whatever the next venture proves to be, soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, you shall have a proof. Reciprocate. The truth is I have no appearance ; a certain air of disreputability is the one constant character that my face presents : the rest change like water. But still I am lean, and still disreputable.

Cling to your youth. It is an artistic stock in trade. Don't give in that you are ageing, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still ; only a little duller, greedier and better tempered ; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium. The last is a great thing for life but—query ?—a bad endowment for art ?

Another note for the art student.

4. See the good in other people's work ; it will never be yours. See the bad in your own, and don't cry about it ; it will be there always. Try to use your faults ; at any rate use your knowledge of them, and don't run your head against stone walls. Art is not like theology ; nothing is forced. You have not to represent the world. You have to represent only what you can represent with pleasure and effect, and the only way to find out what that is is by technical exercise.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. SIMONEAU

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer, 1883*]

MY DEAR FRIEND SIMONEAU,—It would be difficult to tell how glad I was to get your letter with your good news and kind remembrances, it did my heart good to the bottom. I shall never forget the good time we had to-

gether, the many long talks, the games of chess, the flute on an occasion, and the excellent food. Now I am in clover, only my health a mere ruined temple; the ivy grows along its shattered front, otherwise, I have no wish that is not fulfilled: a beautiful large garden, a fine view of plain, sea and mountain; a wife that suits me down to the ground, and a barrel of good Beaujolais. To this I must add that my books grow steadily more popular, and if I could only avoid illness I should be well to do for money, as it is, I keep pretty near the wind. Have I other means? I doubt it. I saw François here; and it was in some respects sad to see him, pining in the ungenial life and not, I think, very well pleased with his relatives. The young men, it is true, adored him, but his niece tried to pump me about what money I had, with an effrontery I was glad to disappoint. How he spoke of you I need not tell you. He is your true friend, dear Simoneau, and your ears should have tingled when we met, for we talked of little but yourself.

The papers you speak about are past dates but I will send you a paper from time to time, as soon as I am able to go out again. We were both well pleased to hear of your marriage, and both Mrs. Stevenson and myself beg to be remembered with the kindest wishes to Mrs. Simoneau. I am glad you have done this. All races are better away from their own country; but I think you French improve the most of all. At home, I like you well enough, but give me the Frenchman abroad! Had you stayed at home, you would probably have acted otherwise. Consult your consciousness, and you will think as I do. How about a law condemning the people of every country to be educated in another, to change sons in short? Should we not gain all around? Would not the Englishman unlearn hypocrisy? Would not the Frenchman learn to put some heart into his friendships? I name what strikes me as the two most obvious defects of the two nations. The French might also learn to be a little less rapacious to women and the English to be a little more honest.

Indeed their merits and defects make a balance.



## The English.

## The French.

hypocrites  
 good, stout reliable friends  
 dishonest to the root  
 fairly decent to women.

free from hypocrisy  
 incapable of friendship  
 fairly honest  
 rather indecent to women.

There is my table, not at all the usual one, but yes, I think you will agree with it. And by travel, each race can cure much of its defects and acquire much of the others' virtues. Let us say that you and I are complete!! You are anyway: I would not change a hair of you. The Americans hold the English faults: dishonest and hypocrites, perhaps not so strongly but still to the exclusion of others. It is strange that such mean defects should be so hard to eradicate, after a century of separation, and so great an admixture of other blood.

Your stay in Mexico must have been interesting indeed: and it is natural you should be so keen against the Church on this side, we have a painful exhibition of the other side: the *librepenseur* a mere priest without the sacraments, the narrowest tyranny of intolerance popular, and in fact a repetition in the XIXth century of theological ill-feeling minus the sermons. We have speeches instead. I met the other day one of the new lay schoolmasters of France; a pleasant cultivated man, and for some time listened to his ravings. "In short," I said, "you are like Louis Quatorze, you wish to drive out of France all who do not agree with you." I thought he would protest; not he!—"Oui, Monsieur," was his answer. And that is the cause of liberty and free thought! But the race of man was born tyrannical; doubtless Adam beat Eve, and when all the rest are dead the last man will be found beating the last dog. In the land of Padre d. R. you see the old tyranny still active on its crutches; in this land, I begin to see the new, a fat fellow, out of leading-strings and already killing flies.

This letter drones along unprofitably enough. Let me put a period to my divagations. Write again soon, and let

me hear good news of you, and I will try to be more quick of answer.

And with the best wishes to yourself and all your family, believe me, your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

The persons mentioned below in the third paragraph are cousins of the writer and playmates of his childhood; two of them, christened Lewis like himself after their Balfour grandfather, had been nicknamed after their birthplaces "Delhi" and "Cramond" to avoid confusion. Mount Chessie is a beautiful place near Lasswade: "Cummy" has described his delight when she cut whistles for him there out of a plane-tree.

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer, 1883*]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—Yes, I own I am a real bad correspondent, and am as bad as can be in most directions.

I have been adding some more poems to your book. I wish they would look sharp about it; but, you see, they are trying to find a good artist to make the illustrations, without which no child would give a kick for it. It will be quite a fine work, I hope. The dedication is a poem too, and has been quite a long while written, but I do not mean you to see it till you get the book; keep the jelly for the last, you know, as you would often recommend in former days, so now you can take your own medicine.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so poorly; I have been very well; it used to be quite the other way, used it not? Do you remember making the whistle at Mount Chessie? I do not think it *was* my knife; I believe it was yours; but rhyme is a very great monarch, and goes before honesty, in these affairs at least. Do you remember, at Warriston, one autumn Sunday, when the beech nuts were on the ground, seeing heaven open? I would like to make a rhyme of that, but cannot.

Is it not strange to think of all the changes: Bob, Cramond, Delhi, Minnie, and Henrietta, all married, and fathers and mothers, and your humble servant just the one



point better off? And such a little while ago all children together! The time goes swift and wonderfully even; and if we are no worse than we are, we should be grateful to the power that guides us. For more than a generation I have now been to the fore in this rough world, and been most tenderly helped, and done cruelly wrong, and yet escaped; and here I am still, the worse for wear, but with some fight in me still, and not unthankful—no, surely not unthankful, or I were then the worst of human beings!

My little dog is a very much better child in every way, both more loving and more amiable; but he is not fond of strangers, and is, like most of his kind, a great, specious humbug.

Fanny has been ill, but is much better again; she now goes donkey rides with an old woman, who compliments her on her French. That old woman—seventy odd—is in a parlous spiritual state.

Pretty soon, in the new sixpenny illustrated magazine, Wogg's picture is to appear: this is a great honour! And the poor soul, whose vanity would just explode if he could understand it, will never be a bit the wiser!—With much love, in which Fanny joins, believe me, your affectionate boy,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

The reference is to Mr. Gosse's volume called *Seventeenth Century Studies*.

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer, 1883*]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have now leisurely read your volume; pretty soon, by the way, you will receive one of mine.

It is a pleasant, instructive, and scholarly volume. The three best being, quite out of sight—Crashaw, Otway, and Etherege. They are excellent; I hesitate between them; but perhaps Crashaw is the most brilliant.

Your Webster is not my Webster; nor your Herrick

my Herrick. On these matters we must fire a gun to leeward, show our colours, and go by. Argument is impossible. They are two of my favourite authors! Herrick above all: I suppose they are two of yours. Well, Janus-like, they do behold us two with diverse countenances, few features are common to these different avatars; and we can but agree to differ, but still with gratitude to our entertainers, like two guests at the same dinner, one of whom takes clear and one white soup. By my way of thinking, neither of us need be wrong.

The other papers are all interesting, adequate, clear, and with a pleasant spice of the romantic. It is a book you may be well pleased to have so finished, and will do you much good. The Crashaw is capital: capital; I like the taste of it. Preface clean and dignified. The handling throughout workmanlike, with some four or five touches of preciousness, which I regret.

With my thanks for information, entertainment, and a pleasurable envy here and there.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

### TO MISS FERRIER

Soon after he was settled again at Hyères, Stevenson had a great shock in the death of one of the oldest and most intimate of his friends of Edinburgh days, Mr. James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* in *Memories and Portraits*). It is in accordance with the expressed wish of this gentleman's surviving sister that publicity is given to the following letters:—

*La Solitude, Hyères* [Sept., 1883]

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER,—They say Walter is gone. You, who know how I have neglected him, will conceive my remorse. I had another letter written; when I heard he was worse, I promised myself to wake up for the last time. Alas, too late!

My dear Walter, set apart that terrible disease, was, in his right mind, the best and gentlest gentleman. God knows he would never intentionally hurt a soul.



Well, he is done with his troubles and out of his long sickness, and I dare say is glad to be at peace and out of the body, which in him seemed the enemy of the fine and kind spirit. He is the first friend I have ever lost, and I find it difficult to say anything and fear to intrude upon your grief. But I had to try to tell you how much I shared it.

Could you get any one to tell me particulars? Do not write yourself of course—I do not mean that; but some one else.

R. L. S.

TO W. E. HENLEY

*La Solitude, Hyères, September 19, 1883*

DEAR BOY,—Our letters vigorously cross: you will ere this have received a note to Coggie: God knows what was in it.

It is strange, a little before the first word you sent me—so late—kindly late, I know and feel—I was thinking in my bed, when I knew you I had six friends—Bob I had by nature; then came the good James Walter—with all his failings—the *gentleman* of the lot, alas to sink so low, alas to do so little, but now, thank God, in his quiet rest; next I found Baxter—well do I remember telling Walter I had unearthed “a W.S. that I thought would do”—it was in the Academy Lane, and he questioned me as to the Signet’s qualifications; fourth came Simpson; somewhere about the same time, I began to get intimate with Jenkin; last came Colvin. Then, one black winter afternoon, long Leslie Stephen, in his velvet jacket, met me in the Spec. by appointment, took me over to the infirmary, and in the crackling, blighting gaslight showed me that old head whose excellent representation I see before me in the photograph. Now when a man has six friends, to introduce a seventh is usually hopeless. Yet when you were presented, you took to them and they to you upon the nail. You must have been a fine fellow; but what a singular fortune I must have had in my six friends that you should take to

all. I don't know if it is good Latin, most probably not : but this is enscrolled before my eyes for Walter : *Tandem e nubibus in apricum properat*. Rest, I suppose, I know, was all that remained ; but O to look back, to remember all the mirth, all the kindness, all the humorous limitations and loved defects of that character ; to think that he was young with me, sharing that weather-beaten, Fergussonian youth, looking forward through the clouds to the sun-burst ; and now clean gone from my path, silent—well, well. This has been a strange awakening. Last night, when I was alone in the house, with the window open on the lovely still night, I could have sworn he was in the room with me ; I could show you the spot ; and, what was very curious, I heard his rich laughter, a thing I had not called to mind for I know not how long.

I see his coral waistcoat studs that he wore the first time he dined in my house ; I see his attitude, leaning back a little, already with something of a portly air, and laughing internally. How I admired him ! And now in the West Kirk.

I am trying to write out this haunting bodily sense of absence ; besides, what else should I write of ?

Yes, looking back, I think of him as one who was good, though sometimes clouded. He was the only gentle one of all my friends, save perhaps the other Walter. And he was certainly the only modest man among the lot. He never gave himself away ; he kept back his secret ; there was always a gentle problem behind all. Dear, dear, what a wreck ; and yet how pleasant is the retrospect ! God doeth all things well, though by what strange, solemn, and murderous contrivances !

It is strange : he was the only man I ever loved who did not habitually interrupt. The fact draws my own portrait. And it is one of the many reasons why I count myself honoured by his friendship. A man like you *had* to like me ; you could not help yourself ; but Ferrier was above me, we were not equals ; his true self humoured and smiled paternally upon my failings, even as I humoured and sorrowed over his.



Well, first his mother, then himself, they are gone :  
“ in their resting graves.”

When I come to think of it, I do not know what I said to his sister, and I fear to try again. Could you send her this ? There is too much both about yourself and me in it ; but that, if you do not mind, is but a mark of sincerity. It would let her know how entirely, in the mind of (I suppose) his oldest friend, the good, true Ferrier obliterates the memory of the other, who was only his “ lunatic brother.”

Judge of this for me, and do as you please ; anyway, I will try to write to her again ; my last was some kind of scrawl that I could not see for crying. This came upon me, remember, with terrible suddenness ; I was surprised by this death ; and it is fifteen or sixteen years since first I saw the handsome face in the Spec. I made sure, besides, to have died first. Love to you, your wife, and her sisters.—Ever yours, dear boy,

R. L. S.

I never knew any man so superior to himself as poor James Walter. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other. And for a beautiful good humour he had no match. I remember breaking in upon him once with a whole-red-hot story (in my worst manner), pouring words upon him by the hour about some truck not worth an egg that had befallen me ; and suddenly, some half hour after, finding that the sweet fellow had some concern of his own of infinitely greater import, that he was patiently and smilingly waiting to consult me on. It sounds nothing ; but the courtesy and the unselfishness were perfect. It makes me rage to think how few knew him, and how many had the chance to sneer at their better.

Well, he was not wasted, that we know ; though if

anything looked liker irony than this fitting of a man out with these rich qualities and faculties to be wrecked and aborted from the very stocks, I do not know the name of it. Yet we see that he has left an influence ; the memory of his patient courtesy has often checked me in rudeness ; has it not you ?

You can form no idea of how handsome Walter was. At twenty he was splendid to see ; then, too, he had the sense of power in him, and great hopes ; he looked forward, ever jesting of course, but he looked to see himself where he had the right to expect. He believed in himself profoundly ; but *he never disbelieved in others*. To the roughest Highland student he always had his fine, kind, open dignity of manner ; and a good word behind his back.

The last time that I saw him before leaving for America—it was a sad blow to both of us. When he heard I was leaving, and that might be the last time we might meet—it almost was so—he was terribly upset, and came round at once. We sat late, in Baxter's empty house, where I was sleeping. My dear friend Walter Ferrier : O if I had only written to him more ! if only one of us in these last days had been well ! But I ever cherished the honour of his friendship, and now when he is gone, I know what I have lost still better. We live on, meaning to meet ; but when the hope is gone, the pang comes.

R. L. S.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

*La Solitude, Hyères, 26th September, 1883*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—It appears a bolt from Transatlantica is necessary to produce four lines from you. It is not flattering ; but as I was always a bad correspondent, 'tis a vice to which I am lenient. I give you to know, however, that I have already twice (this makes three times) sent you what I please to call a letter, and received from you in return a subterfuge—or nothing. . . .



My present purpose, however, which must not be postponed, is to ask you to telegraph to the Americans.

After a summer of good health of a very radiant order, toothache, and the death of a very old friend, which came upon me like a thunder-clap, have rather shelved my powers. I stare upon the paper, not write. I wish I could write like your Sculptors; yet I am well aware that I should not try in that direction. A certain warmth (tepid enough) and a certain dash of the picturesque are my poor essential qualities; and if I went fooling after the too classical, I might lose even these. But I envied you that page.

I am, of course, deep in schemes; I was so ever. Execution alone somewhat halts. How much do you make per annum, I wonder? This year, for the first time, I shall pass £300; I may even get halfway to the next milestone. This seems but a faint remuneration; and the devil of it is, that I manage, with sickness, and moves, and education, and the like, to keep steadily in front of my income. However, I console myself with this, that if I were anything else under God's Heaven, and had the same crank health, I should make an even zero. If I had, with my present knowledge, twelve months of my old health, I would, could, and should do something neat. As it is, I have to tinker at my things in little sittings; and the rent, or the butcher, or something, is always calling me off to rattle up a pot-boiler. And then comes a back-set of my health, and I have to twiddle my fingers and play patience.

Well, I do not complain, but I do envy strong health where it is squandered. Treasure your strength, and may you never learn by experience the profound *ennui* and irritation of the shelved artist. For then, what is life? All that one has done to make one's life effective then doubles the itch of inefficiency.

I trust also you may be long without finding out the devil that there is in a bereavement. After love it is the one great surprise that life preserves for us. Now I don't think I can be astonished any more.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

## TO MISS FERRIER

*La Solitude, Hyères, 30th Sept., 1883*

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter and was interested by all you told me. Yes, I know it is better for him to be gone, and what you say helps me to realise that it is so—I did not know how much he had suffered; it is so that we are cured of life. I am a little afraid to write or think much of Walter just yet; as I have not quite recovered the news and I have my work and my wife to think of.

Some day soon when the sharpness passes off (if it does) I must try to write some more of what he was: he was so little understood. I don't suppose any one knew him better than I did. But just now it is difficult to think of him. For you I do mourn indeed, and admire your courage: the loss is terrible. I have no portrait of him. Is there one? If so please let me have it: if it has to be copied please let it be.

Henley seems to have been as good to dear Walter as he is to all. That introduction was a good turn I did to both. It seems so strange for a friendship to begin all these years ago with so much mirth and now to end with this sorrow. Our little lives are moments in the wake of the eternal silence; but how crowded while they last. His has gone down in peace.

I was not certainly the best companion for Walter, but I do believe I was the best he had. In these early days he was not fortunate in friends—looking back I see most clearly how much we both wanted a man of riper wisdom. We had no religion between the pair of us—that was the flaw. How very different was our last intimacy in Gladstone Terrace. But youth must learn—looking back over these wasted opportunities, I must try rather to remember what I did right, than to bewail the much that I left undone and knew not how to do. I see that even you have allowed yourself to have regrets. Dear Miss Ferrier, sure you were his angel. We all had something to be glad of, in so far as we had understood and loved and perhaps a little



helped the gentle spirit ; but you may certainly be proud. He always loved you ; and I remember in his worst days spoke of you with great affection ; a thing unusual with him ; for he was walking very wild and blind and had no true idea whether of himself or life. The lifting afterwards was beautiful and touching. Dear Miss Ferrier I have given your kind messages to my wife who feels for you and reciprocates the hope to meet. When it may come off I know not. I feel almost ashamed to say that I keep better, I feel as if like Mrs. Leslie " you must hate me for it "—still I can very easily throw back whether by fatigue or want of care, and I do not like to build plans for my return to my own land. Is there no chance of your coming hereabouts ? Though we cannot in our small and disorderly house offer a lady a room, one can be got close by and we can offer possible board and a most lovely little garden for a lounge. Please remember me kindly to your brother John and Sir A. and Lady Grant and believe me with hearty sympathy—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I was rejoiced to hear he never doubted of my love, but I must cure my hate of correspondence. This has been a sharp lesson.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

It will be remembered that " Whistles " or " Penny Whistles " was his own name for the verses of the *Child's Garden*. The proposal referred to at the end of this letter was one which had reached him from Messrs. Lippincott, the American publishers, for a sailing trip to be taken among the Greek Islands and made the subject of a book.

*La Solitude, Hyères* [October, 1883]

My dear excellent, admired, volcanic angel of a lad, trusty as a dog, eruptive as Vesuvius, in all things great, in all the soul of loyalty : greeting.

That you are better spirits me up good. I have had no colour of : *Mag. of Art*. From here, here in Highairs the Palm-trees, I have heard your conversation. It came here

in the form of a Mistral, and I said to myself, Damme, there is some Henley at the foot of this !

I shall try to do the Whistle as suggested ; but I can usually do whistles only by giving my whole mind to it : to produce even such limping verse demanding the whole forces of my untuneful soul. I have other two anyway : better or worse. I am now deep, deep, ocean deep in *Otto* : a letter is a curst distraction, about 100 pp. are near fit for publication ; I am either making a spoon or spoiling the horn of a Caledonian bull, with that airy potentate. God help me, I bury a lot of labour in that principality ; and if I am not greatly a gainer, I am a great loser and a great fool. However, *sursum corda* ; faint heart never writ romance.

Your *Dumas* I think exquisite ; it might even have been stronglier said : the brave old godly pagan, I adore his big footprints on the earth.

Have you read Meredith's *Love in the Valley* ? It got me, I wept ; I remembered that poetry existed.

“ When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror.”

I propose if they (Lippincotts) will let me wait till next Autumn, and go when it is safest, to accept £450 with £100 down ; but it is now too late to go this year. November and December are the months when it is safest ; and the back of the season is broken. I shall gain much knowledge by the trip ; this I look upon as one of the main inducements.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following is in answer to a letter containing remarks on the proofs of the *Child's Garden*, then going round among some of his friends, and on the instalments of *Silverado Squatters* and the *Black Arrow*, which were appearing in the *Century Magazine* and *Young Folks* respectively. The remarks on Professor



Seeley's literary manner were suggested by the *Expansion of England*, which I had lately sent him.

*La Solitude, Hyères* [October 1883]

COLVIN, COLVIN, COLVIN,—Yours received ; also interesting copy of *P. Whistles*. “In the multitude of counsellors the Bible declares there is wisdom,” said my great-uncle, “but I have always found in them distraction.” It is extraordinary how tastes vary : these proofs have been handed about, it appears, and I have had several letters ; and—distraction. *Æsop* : the Miller and the Ass.

Notes on details :—

1. I love the occasional trochaic line ; and so did many excellent writers before me.

2. If you don't like *A Good Boy*, I do.

3. In *Escape at Bedtime*, I found two suggestions. “Shove” for “above” is a correction of the press ; it was so written. “Twinkled” is just the error ; to the child the stars appear to be there ; any word that suggests illusion is a horror.

4. I don't care ; I take a different view of the vocative.

5. Bewildering and childering are good enough for me. These are rhymes, jingles ; I don't go for eternity and the three unities.

I will delete some of those condemned, but not all. I don't care for the name Penny Whistles ; I sent a sheaf to Henley when I sent 'em. But I've forgot the others. I would just as soon call 'em “Rimes for Children” as anything else. I am not proud nor particular.

Your remarks on the *Black Arrow* are to the point. I am pleased you liked Crookback ; he is a fellow whose hellish energy has always fixed my attention. I wish Shakespeare had written the play after he had learned some of the rudiments of literature and art rather than before. Some day, I will re-tickle the Sable Missile, and shoot it, *moyennant finances*, once more into the air ; I can lighten it of much, and devote some more attention to Dick o' Gloucester. It's great sport to write tushery.

By this I reckon you will have heard of my proposed excursiolorum to the Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece,

and kindred sites. If the excursiolorum goes on, that is, if *moyennant finances* comes off, I shall write to beg you to collect introductiolorums for me.

Distinguo: 1. *Silverado* was not written in America, but in Switzerland's icy mountains. 2. What you read is the bleeding and disembowelled remains of what I wrote. 3. The good stuff is all to come—so I think. “The Sea Fogs,” “The Hunter's Family,” “Toils and Pleasures”—*belles pages*.—Yours ever,

RAMNUGGER.

O!—Seeley is too clever to live, and the book a gem. But why has he read too much Arnold? Why will he avoid—obviously avoid—fine writing up to which he has led? This is a winking, curled-and-oiled, ultra-cultured, Oxford-don sort of an affectation that infuriates my honest soul. “You see”—they say—“how unbombastic *we* are; we come right up to eloquence, and, when it's hanging on the pen, dammy, we scorn it!” It is literary Derondaism. If you don't want the woman, the image, or the phrase, mortify your vanity and avoid the appearance of wanting them.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

The first paragraph of the following refers to contributions of R. L. S. to the *Magazine of Art* under Mr. Henley's editorship.

*La Solitude Hyères* [Autumn, 1883]

DEAR LAD,—Glad you like *Fontainebleau*. I am going to be the means, under heaven, of aerating or literating your pages. The idea that because a thing is a picture-book all the writing should be on the wrong tack is *triste* but widespread. Thus *Hokusai* will be really a gossip on convention, or in great part. And the Skelt will be as like a Charles Lamb as I can get it. The writer should write, and not illustrate pictures: else it's bosh! . . .

Your remarks about the ugly are my eye. Ugliness is only the prose of horror. It is when you are not able to



write *Macbeth* that you write *Thérèse Raquin*. Fashions are external: the essence of art only varies in so far as fashion widens the field of its application; art is a mill whose thirlage, in different ages, widens and contracts; but, in any case and under any fashion, the great man produces beauty, terror, and mirth, and the little man produces cleverness (personalities, psychology) instead of beauty, ugliness instead of terror, and jokes instead of mirth. As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be ever, world without end. Amen!

And even as you read, you say, "Of course, *quelle rengaine!*"

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

*Manhattan* mentioned below is the name of a short-lived New York magazine, the editor of which had asked through Mr. Low for a contribution from R. L. S.

*La Solitude, Hyères, October [1883]*

MY DEAR LOW,— . . . Some day or other, in *Cassell's Magazine of Art*, you will see a paper which will interest you, and where your name appears. It is called *Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Artists*, and the signature of R. L. Stevenson will be found annexed.

Please tell the editor of *Manhattan* the following secrets for me: 1st, That I am a beast; 2nd, that I owe him a letter; 3rd, that I have lost his, and cannot recall either his name or address; 4th, that I am very deep in engagements, which my absurd health makes it hard for me to overtake; but 5th, that I will bear him in mind; 6th and last, that I am a brute.

My address is still the same, and I live in a most sweet corner of the universe, sea and fine hills before me, and a rich variegated plain; and at my back a craggy hill, loaded with vast feudal ruins. I am very quiet; a person passing by my door half startles me; but I enjoy the most aromatic airs, and at night the most wonderful view into a moonlit

garden. By day this garden fades into nothing, overpowered by its surroundings and the luminous distance ; but at night and when the moon is out, that garden, the arbour, the flight of stairs that mount the artificial hillock, the plumed blue gum-trees, that hang trembling, become the very skirts of Paradise. Angels I know frequent it ; and it thrills all night with the flutes of silence. Damn that garden ;—and by day it is gone.

Continue to testify boldly against realism. Down with Dagon, the fish god ! All art swings down towards imitation, in these days, fatally. But the man who loves art with wisdom sees the joke ; it is the lustful that tremble and respect her ladyship ; but the honest and romantic lovers of the Muse can see a joke and sit down to laugh with Apollo.

The prospect of your return to Europe is very agreeable ; and I was pleased by what you said about your parents. One of my oldest friends died recently, and this has given me new thoughts of death. Up to now I had rather thought of him as a mere personal enemy of my own ; but now that I see him hunting after my friends, he looks altogether darker. My own father is not well ; and Henley, of whom you must have heard me speak, is in a questionable state of health. These things are very solemn, and take some of the colour out of life. It is a great thing, after all, to be a man of reasonable honour and kindness. Do you remember once consulting me in Paris whether you had not better sacrifice honesty to art ; and how, after much confabulation, we agreed that your art would suffer if you did ? We decided better than we knew. In this strange welter where we live, all hangs together by a million filaments ; and to do reasonably well by others, is the first pre-requisite of art. Art is a virtue ; and if I were the man I should be, my art would rise in the proportion of my life.

If you were privileged to give some happiness to your parents, I know your art will gain by it. *By God it will !—*  
*Sic subscribitur,*

R. L. S.



TO R. A. M. STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Hyères [October 1883]*

MY DEAR BOB,—Yes, I got both your letters at Lyons, but have been since then decaying in several steps. Toothache ; fever ; Ferrier's death ; lung. Now it is decided I am to leave to-morrow, penniless, for Nice to see Dr. Williams.

I was much struck by your last. I have written a breathless note on Realism for Henley ; a fifth part of the subject hurriedly touched, which will show you how my thoughts are driving. You are now at last beginning to think upon the problems of executive, plastic art, for you are now for the first time attacking them. Hitherto you have spoken and thought of two things—technique and the *ars artium*, or common background of all arts. Studio work is the real touch. That is the genial error of the present French teaching. Realism I regard as a mere question of method. The “brown foreground,” “old mastery,” and the like, ranking with villanelles, as technical sports and pastimes. Real art, whether ideal or realistic, addresses precisely the same feeling, and seeks the same qualities—significance or charm. And the same—very same—inspiration is only methodically differentiated according as the artist is an arrant realist or an arrant idealist. Each, by his own method, seeks to save and perpetuate the same significance or charm ; the one by suppressing, the other by forcing, detail. All other idealism is the brown foreground over again, and hence only art in the sense of a game, like cup and ball. All other realism is not art at all—but not at all. It is, then, an insincere and showy handicraft.

Were you to re-read some Balzac, as I have been doing, it would greatly help to clear your eyes. He was a man who never found his method. An inarticulate Shakespeare, smothered under forcible-feeble detail. It is astounding to the riper mind how bad he is, how feeble, how untrue, how tedious ; and, of course, when he surrendered to his temperament, how good and powerful.

And yet never plain nor clear. He could not consent to be dull, and thus became so. He would leave nothing undeveloped, and thus drowned out of sight of land amid the multitude of crying and incongruous details. There is but one art—to omit ! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an *Iliad* of a daily paper.

Your definition of seeing is quite right. It is the first part of omission to be partly blind. Artistic sight is judicious blindness. Sam Bough must have been a jolly blind old boy. He would turn a corner, look for one-half or quarter minute, and then say, " This'll do, lad." Down he sat, there and then, with whole artistic plan, scheme of colour, and the like, and began by laying a foundation of powerful and seemingly incongruous colour on the block. He saw, not the scene, but the water-colour sketch. Every artist by sixty should so behold nature. Where does he learn that ? In the studio, I swear. He goes to nature for facts, relations, values—material ; as a man, before writing a historical novel, reads up memoirs. But it is not by reading memoirs that he has learned the selective criterion. He has learned that in the practice of his art ; and he will never learn it well, but when disengaged from the ardent struggle of immediate representation, of realistic and *ex facto* art. He learns it in the crystallisation of day-dreams ; in changing, not in copying, fact ; in the pursuit of the ideal, not in the study of nature. These temples of art are, as you say, inaccessible to the realistic climber. It is not by looking at the sea that you get

" The multitudinous seas incarnadine,"

nor by looking at Mount Blanc that you find

" And visited all night by troops of stars."

A kind of ardour of the blood is the mother of all this ; and according as this ardour is swayed by knowledge and seconded by craft, the art expression flows clear, and significance and charm, like a moon rising, are born above the barren juggle of mere symbols.



The painter must study more from nature than the man of words. But why? Because literature deals with men's business and passions which, in the game of life, we are irresistibly obliged to study; but painting with relations of light, and colour, and significances, and form, which, from the immemorial habit of the race, we pass over with an unregardful eye. Hence this crouching upon camp-stools, and these crusts.\* But neither one nor other is a part of art, only preliminary studies.

I want you to help me to get people to understand that realism is a method, and only methodic in its consequences; when the realist is an artist, that is, and supposing the idealist with whom you compare him to be anything but a *farceur* and a *dilettante*. The two schools of working do, and should, lead to the choice of different subjects. But that is a consequence, not a cause. See my chaotic note, which will appear, I fancy, in November in Henley's sheet.

Poor Ferrier, it bust me horrid. He was, after you, the oldest of my friends.

I am now very tired, and will go to bed having prelected freely. Fanny will finish.

R. L. S.

### TO THOMAS STEVENSON

Some pages of MS. exist in which the writer at this time attempted to re-cast and expand a portion of the *Lay Morals* of 1879. A letter written some days earlier to his father, and partly quoted in Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life* (ed. 1906, p. 209), explains his purpose.

*La Solitude, Hyères, 12th October, 1883*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just lunched; the day is exquisite, the air comes through the open window rich with odour, and I am by no means spiritually minded. Your letter, however, was very much valued, and has been read oftener than once. What you say about yourself I was glad to hear; a little decent resignation is not only becoming a Christian, but is likely to be excellent for the health of a Stevenson. To fret and fume is undignified,

\* *Croûtes*: crude studies from nature.

suicidally foolish, and theologically unpardonable ; we are here not to make, but to tread predestined, pathways ; we are the foam of a wave, and to preserve a proper equanimity is not merely the first part of submission to God, but the chief of possible kindnesses to those about us. I am lecturing myself, but you also. To do our best is one part, but to wash our hands smilingly of the consequence is the next part, of any sensible virtue.

I have come, for the moment, to a pause in my moral works ; for I have many irons in the fire, and I wish to finish something to bring coin before I can afford to go on with what I think doubtfully to be a duty. It is a most difficult work ; a touch of the parson will drive off those I hope to influence ; a touch of overstrained laxity, besides disgusting, like a grimace, may do harm. Nothing that I have ever seen yet speaks directly and efficaciously to young men ; and I do hope I may find the art and wisdom to fill up a gap. The great point, as I see it, is to ask as little as possible, and meet, if it may be, every view or absence of view ; and it should be, must be, easy. Honesty is the one desideratum ; but think how hard a one to meet. I think all the time of Ferrier and myself, these are the pair that I address. Poor Ferrier, so much a better man than I, and such a temporal wreck. But the thing of which we must divest our minds is to look partially upon others ; all is to be viewed ; and the creature judged, as he must be by his Creator, not dissected through a prism of morals, but in the unrefracted ray. So seen, and in relation to the almost omnipotent surroundings, who is to distinguish between F. and such a man as Dr. Candish, or between such a man as David Hume and such an one as Robert Burns ? To compare my poor and good Walter with myself is to make me startle ; he, upon all grounds above the merely expedient, was the nobler being. Yet wrecked utterly ere the full age of manhood ; and the last skirmishes so well fought, so humanly useless, so pathetically brave, only the leaps of an expiring lamp. All this is a very pointed instance. It shuts the mouth. I have learned more, in some ways, from him than from any other soul I ever met ;



and he, strange to think, was the best gentleman, in all kinder senses, that I ever knew.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

The paper referred to at the beginning of the second paragraph is one on R. L. S. in the *Century Magazine*, the first seriously critical notice, says Mr. Low, which appeared of him in the States.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, Oct. 23, 1883*]

MY DEAR LOW,—*C'est d'un bon camarade* ; and I am much obliged to you for your two letters and the inclosure. Times are a litle changed with all of us since the ever memorable days of Lavenue : hallowed be his name ! hallowed his old Fleury !—of which you did not see—I think—as I did—the glorious apotheosis : advanced on a Tuesday to three francs, on the Thursday to six, and on Friday swept off, holus-bolus, for the proprietor's private consumption. Well, we had the start of that proprietor. Many a good bottle came our way, and was, I think, worthily made welcome.

I am pleased that Mr. Gilder should like my literature ; and I ask you particularly to thank Mr. Bunner (have I the name right ?) for his notice, which was of that friendly, headlong sort that really pleases an author like what the French call a “shake-hands.” It pleased me the more coming from the States, where I have met not much recognition, save from the buccaneers, and above all from pirates who misspell my name. I saw my book advertised in a number of the *Critic* as the work of one R. L. Stephenson ; and, I own, I boiled. It is so easy to know the name of the man whose book you have stolen ; for there it is, at full length, on the title-page of your booty. But no, damn him, not he ! He calls me Stephenson. These woes I only refer to by the way, as they set a higher value on the *Century* notice.

I am now a person with an established ill-health—a wife—a dog possessed with an evil, a Gadarene spirit—a chalet on a hill, looking out over the Mediterranean—a certain reputation—and very obscure finances. Otherwise, very much the same, I guess; and were a bottle of Fleury a thing to be obtained, capable of developing theories along with a fit spirit even as of yore. Yet I now draw near to the Middle Ages; nearly three years ago, that fatal Thirty struck; and yet the great work is not yet done—not yet even conceived. But so, as one goes on, the wood seems to thicken, the footpath to narrow, and the House Beautiful on the hill's summit to draw further and further away. We learn, indeed, to use our means; but only to learn, along with it, the paralysing knowledge that these means are only applicable to two or three poor commonplace motives. Eight years ago, if I could have slung ink as I can now, I should have thought myself well on the road after Shakespeare; and now—I find I have only got a pair of walking-shoes and not yet begun to travel. And art is still away there on the mountain summit. But I need not continue; for, of course, this is your story just as much as it is mine; and, strange to think, it was Shakespeare's too, and Beethoven's, and Phidias's. It is a blessed thing that, in this forest of art, we can pursue our woodlice and sparrows, *and not catch them*, with almost the same fervour of exhilaration as that with which Sophocles hunted and brought down the Mastodon.

Tell me something of your work, and your wife.—My dear fellow, I am yours ever,

R. L. STEVENSON.

My wife begs to be remembered to both of you; I cannot say as much for my dog, who has never seen you, but he would like, on general principles, to bite you.

#### TO W. E. HENLEY

By this time *Treasure Island* was out in book form, and the following is in reply to some reflections on its seamanship which had been conveyed to him through Mr. Henley.



[*La Solitude, Hyères, November, 1883*]

MY DEAR LAD,— . . . Of course, my seamanship is jimmy ; did I not beseech you I know not how often to find me an ancient mariner—and you, whose own wife's own brother is one of the ancientest, did nothing for me ? As for my seamen, did Runciman ever know eighteenth century Buccaneers ? No ? Well, no more did I. But I have known and sailed with seamen too, and lived and eaten with them ; and I made my put-up shot in no great ignorance, but as a put-up thing has to be made, *i.e.* to be coherent and picturesque, and damn the expense. Are they fairly lively on the wires ? Then, favour me with your tongues. Are they wooden, and dim, and no sport ? Then it is I that am silent, otherwise not. The work, strange as it may sound in the ear, is not a work of realism. The next thing I shall hear is that the etiquette is wrong in *Otto's Court* ! With a warrant, and I mean it to be so, and the whole matter never cost me half a thought. I make these paper people to please myself, and Skelt, and God Almighty, and with no ulterior purpose. Yet am I mortal myself ; for, as I remind you, I begged for a supervising mariner. However, my heart is in the right place. I have been to sea, but I never crossed the threshold of a court ; and the courts shall be the way I want 'em.

I'm glad to think I owe you the review that pleased me best of all the reviews I ever had ; the one I liked best before that was ——'s on the *Arabians*. These two are the flowers of the collection, according to me. To live reading such reviews and die eating ortolans—such is my aspiration.

Whenever you come you will be equally welcome. I am trying to finish *Otto* ere you shall arrive, so as to take and be able to enjoy a well-earned—O yes, a well-earned—holiday. Longman fetched by *Otto* : is it a spoon or a spoilt horn ? Momentous, if the latter ; if the former, a spoon to dip much praise and pudding, and to give, I do think, much pleasure. The last part, now in hand, much smiles upon me.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

## TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Hyères [November, 1883]*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You must not blame me too much for my silence ; I am over head and ears in work, and do not know what to do first. I have been hard at *Otto*, hard at *Silverado* proofs, which I have worked over again to a tremendous extent ; cutting, adding, rewriting, until some of the worst chapters of the original are now, to my mind, as good as any. I was the more bound to make it good, as I had such liberal terms ; it's not for want of trying if I have failed.

I got your letter on my birthday ; indeed, that was how I found it out about three in the afternoon, when postie comes. Thank you for all you said. As for my wife, that was the best investment ever made by man ; but “ in our branch of the family ” we seem to marry well. I, considering my piles of work, am wonderfully well ; I have not been so busy for I know not how long. I hope you will send me the money I asked however, as I am not only penniless, but shall remain so in all human probability for some considerable time. I have got in the mass of my expectations ; and the £100 which is to float us on the new year cannot come due till *Silverado* is all ready ; I am delaying it myself for the moment ; then will follow the binders and the travellers and an infinity of other nuisances ; and only at the last, the jingling-tingling.

Do you know that *Treasure Island* has appeared ? In the November number of Henley's *Magazine*, a capital number anyway, there is a funny publisher's puff of it for your book ; also a bad article by me. Lang dotes on *Treasure Island* : “ Except *Tom Sawyer* and the *Odyssey*,” he writes, “ I never liked any romance so much.” I will inclose the letter though. The Bogue is angelic, although very dirty. It has rained—at last ! It was jolly cold when the rain came.

I was overjoyed to hear such good news of my father. Let him go on at that !—Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.



## TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Of the "small ships" here mentioned, *Fontainebleau* and *The Character of Dogs* are well known: *A Misadventure in France* is probably a draft of the *Epilogue to an Inland Voyage*, not published till five years later. *The Travelling Companion* (of which I remember little except that its scene was partly laid in North Italy and that a publisher to whom it was shown declared it a work of genius but indecent) was abandoned some two years later.

*La Solitude, Hyères* [November, 1883]

£10,000 Reward!

WHEREAS Sidney Colvin, more generally known as the Guardian Angel, has vanished from the gaze of Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the above reward is offered as a means to discover the whereabouts of the misguided gentleman. He was known as a man of irregular habits, and his rowdy exterior would readily attract attention in a crowd. He was never known to resist a drink; whisky was his favourite dish. If any one will bring him to Mr. Stevenson's back area door, dead or alive, the greatest rejoicing will be felt by a bereaved and uneasy family.

Also, wherefore not a word, dear Colvin? My news is: splendid health; great success of the *Black Arrow*; another tale demanded, readers this time (the Lord lighten them!) pleased; a great variety of small ships launched or still upon the stocks—(also, why not send the annotated proof of *Fontainebleau*? ce n'est pas d'un bon camarade); a paper on dogs for Carr\*; a paper called *Old Mortality*, a paper called *A Misadventure in France*, a tale entitled *The Travelling Companion*; Otto arrested one foot in air; and last and not least, a great demand for news of Sidney Colvin and others. Herewith I pause, for why should I cast pearls before swine?

A word, Guardian Angel. You are much loved in this

\* Mr. J. Comyns Carr, at this time editing the *English Illustrated Magazine*.

house, not by me only, but by the wife. The Wogg himself is anxious.—Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

I have said how from the date when Stevenson's life and destiny had come to be bound up for good and all with those of Mrs. Osbourne, whom he followed to California and brought back to England as his wife in 1879—I have said how from that date the lady became, of the pair, much the more frequent correspondent of his old friend and confidante, Mrs. Sitwell. But when he did take up the pen to write to her himself, it was in a tone always of quite unabated affection and confidence. The last such letter the reader has had before him was written from Davos in a mood of sickness and black depression; the following specimen from Hyères is in a contrasted mood of riotous high spirits and topsy-turvy nonsense such as in the actual presence and company of his friends was at all times, to their delight, apt to come upon him. Unluckily the first sheet is lost, and the letter begins in the middle:—

TO MRS. SITWELL

[*Hyères, Autumn, 1883*]

Fanny out of sorts; self had a cold, but better, and only silly, as the above will amply demonstrate. I have wasted all my time fooling, and now must close this valuable epistle. There is nothing like a good correspondent: Absence is destroyed: Why, it's like living in the same house! All the details of your friend's life unroll before you like a panorama; you know his thoughts, his feelings, his minutest habits and surroundings. So, in this era of the postal union, we laugh at separation. But I fear I weary you with this extreme particularity, or I might go on to tell you . . . and that . . . and all about . . . which it would be too much to ask you to peruse. Let us then bring this document to a deserved conclusion, and may the Lord have mercy on its soul!



It is as impossible for me to be serious as for a Camel to go through the eye of a Commercial Traveller. Something gave way within me, like a trap falling, and ever since I have not ceased to laugh. Heaven grant I be not fey ! Do you know what fey is ? A certain causeless mirth and high spirit is supposed in Scotland to be the forerunner of destiny. The Greeks thought so too ; and for aught I know, the Mesopotamians. Thus if you see anyone extremely happy, you may predict with certainty that his mood will not continue unchanged ; and if you find him offensively melancholy, you had better look out for somebody else. Joy and grief are rarely permanent, or so philosophers affirm, and I am too little of a scholar to controvert their doctrine. Let us, therefore, take them as they come ; and when we are out of spirits be damned miserable, and when we are happy, be as foolish as we know how—Shakespeare. But I fear I digress. To continue : I remain,

Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. MCIDIOT STEVENSON OF BEDLAM.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

*La Solitude, Hyères [November, 1883]*

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been bad, but as you were worse, I feel no shame. I raise a blooming countenance, not the evidence of a self-righteous spirit.

I continue my uphill fight with the twin spirits of bankruptcy and indigestion. Duns rage about my portal, at least to fancy's ear.

I suppose you heard of Ferrier's death : my oldest friend, except Bob. It has much upset me. I did not fancy how much. I am strangely concerned about it.

My house is the loveliest spot in the universe ; the moonlight nights we have are incredible ; love, poetry and music, and the *Arabian Nights*, inhabit just my corner of the world—nest there like mavis.

Here lies  
The carcase  
of  
Robert Louis Stevenson  
An active, austere, and not inelegant  
writer,  
who,  
at the termination of a long career,  
wealthy, wise, benevolent, and honoured by  
the attention of two hemispheres,  
yet owned it to have been his crowning favour  
TO INHABIT  
LA SOLITUDE.

(With the consent of the intelligent edility of Hyères, he has been interred, below this frugal stone, in the garden which he honoured for so long with his poetic presence.)

I must write more solemn letters. Adieu. Write.  
R. L. S.

### TO MRS. MILNE

This is to a cousin who had been one of his favourite playmates in childhood, and had recognised some allusions in the proof slips of the *Child's Garden* (the piece called "A Pirate Story").

*La Solitude, Hyères [November, 1883]*

MY DEAR HENRIETTA,—Certainly ; who else would they be ? More by token, on that particular occasion, you were sailing under the title of Princess Royal ; I, after a furious contest, under that of Prince Alfred ; and Willie, still a little sulky, as the Prince of Wales. We were all in a buck basket about halfway between the swing and the gate ; and I can still see the Pirate Squadron heave in sight upon the weather bow.

I wrote a piece besides on Giant Bunker ; but I was not happily inspired, and it is condemned. Perhaps I'll try again ; he was a horrid fellow, Giant Bunker ! and some of my happiest hours were passed in pursuit of him. You were a capital fellow to play : how few there were who



could ! None better than yourself. I shall never forget some of the days at Bridge of Allan ; they were one golden dream. See " A Good Boy " in the *Penny Whistles*, much of the sentiment of which is taken direct from one evening at B. of A. when we had had a great play with the little Glasgow girl. Hallowed be that fat book of fairy tales ! Do you remember acting the Fair One with Golden Locks ? What a romantic drama ! Generally speaking, whenever I think of play, it is pretty certain that you will come into my head. I wrote a paper called *Child's Play* once, where, I believe, you or Willie would recognise things. . . .

Surely Willie is just the man to marry ; and if his wife wasn't a happy woman, I think I could tell her who was to blame. Is there no word of it ? Well, these things are beyond arrangement ; and the wind bloweth where it listeth—which, I observe, is generally towards the west in Scotland. Here it prefers a south-easterly course, and is called the Mistral—usually with an adjective in front. But if you will remember my yesterday's toothache and this morning's crick, you will be in a position to choose an adjective for yourself. Not that the wind is unhealthy ; only when it comes strong, it is both very high and very cold, which makes it the d-v-l. But as I am writing to a lady, I had better avoid this topic ; winds requiring a great scope of language.

Please remember me to all at home ; give Ramsay a pennyworth of acidulated drops for his good taste.—And believe me, your affectionate cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO MISS FERRIER

*La Solitude, Hyères* [November 22, 1883]

DEAR MISS FERRIER,—Many thanks for the photograph. It is—well, it is like most photographs. The sun is an artist of too much renown ; and, at any rate, we who knew Walter " in the brave days of old " will be difficult to please.

I was inexpressibly touched to get a letter from some lawyers as to some money. I have never had any account with my friends ; some have gained and some lost ; and I should feel there was something dishonest in a partial liquidation even if I could recollect the facts, *which I cannot*. But the fact of his having put aside this memorandum touched me greatly.

The mystery of his life is great. Our chemist in this place, who had been at Malvern, recognised the picture. You may remember Walter had a romantic affection for all pharmacies ? and the bottles in the window were for him a poem ? He said once that he knew no pleasure like driving through a lamplit city, waiting for the chemists to go by.

All these things return now.

He had a pretty full translation of Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters*, which we read together, as well as the second part of *Faust*, in Gladstone Terrace, he helping me with the German. There is no keepsake I should more value than the MS. of that translation. They were the best days I ever had with him, little dreaming all would so soon be over. It needs a blow like this to convict a man of mortality and its burthen. I always thought I should go by myself ; not to survive. But now I feel as if the earth were undermined, and all my friends have lost one thickness of reality since that one passed. Those are happy who can take it otherwise ; with that I found things all beginning to dislimn. Here we have no abiding city, and one felt as though he had—and O too much acted.

But if you tell me, he did not feel my silence. However, he must have done so ; and my guilt is irreparable now. I thank God at least heartily that he did not resent it.

Please remember me to Sir Alexander and Lady Grant, to whose care I will address this. When next I am in Edinburgh I will take flowers, alas ! to the West Kirk. Many a long hour we passed in graveyards, the man who has gone and I—or rather not that man—but the beautiful, genial, witty youth who so betrayed him.—Dear Miss Ferrier, I am yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

This refers to some dispute which had arisen with an editor (I forget whom) concerning the refusal of an article on Salvini. "Fastidious Brisk" was a name coined by Mr. Henley for Stevenson—very inappropriately as I always thought.

*La Solitude, Hyères, Autumn, 1883*

MY DEAR LAD,—You know your own business best ; but I wish your honesty were not so warfaring. These conflicts pain Lucretian sitters on the shore ; and one wonders—one wonders—wonders and whimpers. I do not say my attitude is noble ; but is yours conciliatory ? I revere Salvini, but I shall never see him—nor anybody—play again. That is all a matter of history, heroic history, to me. Were I in London, I should be the liker Tantalus—no more. But as for these quarrels : in not many years shall we not all be clay-cold and safe below ground, you with your loud-mouthed integrity, I with my fastidious briskness,—and—with all their faults and merits, swallowed in silence. It seems to me, in ignorance of cause, that when the dustman has gone by, these quarrellings will prick the conscience. Am I wrong ? I am a great sinner ; so, my brave friend, are you ; the others also. Let us a little imitate the divine patience and the divine sense of humour, and smilingly tolerate those faults and virtues that have so brief a period and so intertwined a being.

I fear I was born a parson ; but I live very near upon the margin (though, by your leave, I may outlive you all !), and too much rigour in these daily things sounds to me like clatter on the kitchen dishes. If it might be—could it not be smoothed ? This very day my father writes me he has gone to see, upon his deathbed, an old friend to whom for years he has not spoken or written. On his deathbed ; no picking up of the lost stitches ; merely to say : my little fury, my spotted uprightness, after having split our lives, have not a word of quarrel to say more. And the same post brings me the news of another—War ! Things in this troubled medium are not so clear, dear Henley ; there are

faults upon all hands ; and the end comes, and Ferrier's grave gapes for us all.

THE PROSY PREACHER.

(But written in deep dejection, my dear man)

Suppose they *are* wrong ? Well, am I not tolerated, are you not tolerated ?—we and *our* faults ?

To W. H. Low

*La Solitude, Hyères, Var, 13th December, 1883*

MY DEAR LOW,— . . . I was much pleased with what you said about my work. Ill-health is a great handicapper in the race. I have never at command that press of spirits that are necessary to strike out a thing red-hot. *Silverado* is an example of stuff worried and pawed about, God knows how often, in poor health, and you can see for yourself the result : good pages, an imperfect fusion, a certain languor of the whole. Not, in short, art. I have told Roberts to send you a copy of the book when it appears, where there are some fair passages that will be new to you. My brief romance, *Prince Otto*—far my most difficult adventure up to now—is near an end. I have still one chapter to write *de fond en comble*, and three or four to strengthen or recast. The rest is done. I do not know if I have made a spoon, or only spoiled a horn ; but I am tempted to hope the first. If the present bargain hold, it will not see the light of day for some thirteen months. Then I shall be glad to know how it strikes you. There is a good deal of stuff in it, both dramatic and, I think, poetic ; and the story is not like these purposeless fables of to-day, but is, at least, intended to stand firm upon a base of philosophy—or morals—as you please. It has been long gestated, and is wrought with care. *Enfin, nous verrons*. My labours have this year for the first time been rewarded with upwards of £350 ; that of itself, so base we are ! encourages me ; and the better tenor of my health yet more.—Remember me to Mrs. Low, and believe me, yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Dec., 1883*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We have been in a terrible quandary as to Lloyd's Christmas present ; and I have finally thought that nothing could be better or more useful than the 1st vol. of *Chambers' Cyclopædia* : the present may thus be resumed and continued "in our next" on subsequent solemnities. Please, saying nothing to him beforehand, let him have it on the Xmas morning from his mother and me.

Tell Uncle George that, warned by confounded experience, I had the iodide reduced to one half in his prescription ; and even that has poisoned me. Can the iodide not be changed or left out ? My friend, the chemist, please tell him, was in ecstasies over his prescription—"tasted it," in the old phrase, like a poem—and vowed it was a pleasure to make up.

You know, I once nearly died of a single dose of iodide of potassium, and my sufferings on that occasion I shall never forget.

Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

## TO THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, December 20, 1883*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I do not know which of us is to blame ; I suspect it is you this time. The last accounts of you were pretty good, I was pleased to see ; I am, on the whole, very well—suffering a little still from my fever and liver complications, but better.

I have just finished re-reading a book, which I counsel you above all things *not* to read, as it has made me very ill, and would make you worse—Lockhart's *Scott*. It is worth reading, as all things are from time to time that keep us nose to nose with fact ; though I think such reading may be abused, and that a great deal of life is better spent in

reading of a light and yet chivalrous strain. Thus, no Waverley novel approaches in power, blackness, bitterness, and moral elevation to the diary and Lockhart's narrative of the end ; and yet the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the Life. You may take a tonic daily, but not phlebotomy.

The great double danger of taking life too easily, and taking it too hard, how difficult it is to balance that ! But we are all too little inclined to faith ; we are all, in our serious moments, too much inclined to forget that all are sinners, and fall justly by their faults, and therefore that we have no more to do with that than with the thunder-cloud ; only to trust, and do our best, and wear as smiling a face as may be for others and ourselves. But there is no royal road among this complicated business. Hegel the German got the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies : the contrary of everything is its postulate. That is, of course, grossly expressed, but gives a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life. For your part, there is no doubt as to your duty—to take things easy and be as happy as you can, for your sake, and my mother's, and that of many besides. Excuse this sermon.—  
Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, December 25, 1883*

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—This it is supposed will reach you about Christmas, and I believe I should include Lloyd in the greeting. But I want to lecture my father ; he is not grateful enough ; he is like Fanny ; his resignation is not the “ true blue.” A man who has gained a stone ; whose son is better, and, after so many fears to the contrary, I dare to say, a credit to him ; whose business is arranged ; whose marriage is a picture—what I should call resignation in such a case as his would be to “ take down



his fiddle and play as lood as ever he could." That and nought else. And now, you dear old pious ingrate, on this Christmas morning, think what your mercies have been ; and do not walk too far before your breakfast—as far as to the top of India Street, then to the top of Dundas Street, and then to your ain stair heid ; and do not forget that even as *laborare*, so *joculari, est orare* ; and to be happy the first step to being pious.

I have as good as finished my novel, and a hard job it has been—but now practically over, *laus deo* ! My financial prospects better than ever before ; my excellent wife a touch dolorous, like Mr. Tommy ; my Bogue quite converted, and myself in good spirits. O, send Curry Powder per Baxter.

R. L. S.

#### TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] last Sunday of '83

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I give my father up. I give him a parable : that the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the tragic Life. And he takes it backside foremost, and shakes his head, and is gloomier than ever. Tell him that I give him up. I don't want no such a parent. This is not the man for my money. I do not call that by the name of religion which fills a man with bile. I write him a whole letter, bidding him beware of extremes, and telling him that his gloom is gallows-worthy ; and I get back an answer—Perish the thought of it.

Here am I on the threshold of another year, when, according to all human foresight, I should long ago have been resolved into my elements ; here am I, who you were persuaded was born to disgrace you—and, I will do you the justice to add, on no such insufficient grounds—no very burning discredit when all is done ; here am I married, and the marriage recognised to be a blessing of the first order, At at Lloyd's. There is he, at his not first youth, able to take more exercise than I at thirty-three, and gaining a

stone's weight, a thing of which I am incapable. There are you ; has the man no gratitude ? There is Smeoroch \* : is he blind ? Tell him from me that all this is

### NOT THE TRUE BLUE !

I will think more of his prayers when I see in him a spirit of *praise*. Piety is a more childlike and happy attitude than he admits. Martha, Martha, do you hear the knocking at the door ? But Mary was happy. Even the Shorter Catechism, not the merriest epitome of religion, and a work exactly as pious although not quite so true as the multiplication table—even that dry-as-rust epitome begins with a heroic note. What is man's chief end ? Let him study that ; and ask himself if to refuse to enjoy God's kindest gifts is in the spirit indicated. Up, Dullard ! It is better service to enjoy a novel than to mump.

I have been most unjust to the Shorter Catechism, I perceive. I wish to say that I keenly admire its merits as a performance ; and that all that was in my mind was its peculiarly unreligious and unmoral texture ; from which defect it can never, of course, exercise the least influence on the minds of children. But they learn fine style and some austere thinking unconsciously.—Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

### TO DAVID A. STEVENSON, C.E.

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, Dec. 31st, 1883*

MY DEAR DAVIE,—At the beginning of the end of this year, I had many thoughts of the past, many of yourself, and many of your mother, who was the idol of my childhood. I had it in my mind to write to Uncle David, but I thought it might be merely an importunate intrusion, and decided to write rather to yourself.

The way in which life separates people is very painful.

\* A favourite Skye terrier. Mr Stevenson was a great lover of dogs.



It is nearly a year since we had a New Year's walk ; but I have not forgotten the past, and your mother I shall never forget. I am profoundly a Stevenson in the matter of not giving presents. Once only that I can remember did I, of my own notion, give a present : and that was before '57, when I " asked leave " to give a present to Aunt Elizabeth. I do not suppose that a greater testimony could be given to her extraordinary charm and kindness. I never saw anybody like her : a look from Aunt Elizabeth was like sunshine.

Please excuse this very blundering scrawl ; understand what is unsaid ; and accept, for yourself and all the family, my most sincere good wishes,

Your affectionate cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var,*  
January 1 [1884]

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—A Good New Year to you. The year closes, leaving me with £50 in the bank, owing no man nothing, £100 more due to me in a week or so, and £150 more in the course of the month ; and I can look back on a total receipt of £465, os. 6d. for the last twelve months !

And yet I am not happy !

Yet I beg ! Here is my beggary :—

1. Sellar's Trial.
2. George Borrow's Book about Wales.
3. My Grandfather's Trip to Holland.
4. And (but this is, I fear, impossible) the Bell Rock Book.

When I think of how last year began, after four months of sickness and idleness, all my plans gone to water, myself starting alone, a kind of spectre, for Nice—should I not be grateful ? Come, let us sing unto the Lord !

Nor should I forget the expected visit, but I will not

believe in that till it befall ; I am no cultivator of disappointments, 'tis a herb that does not grow in my garden ; but I get some good crops both of remorse and gratitude. The last I can recommend to all gardeners ; it grows best in shiny weather, but once well grown, is very hardy ; it does not require much labour ; only that the husbandman should smoke his pipe about the flowerplots and admire God's pleasant wonders. Winter green (otherwise known as Resignation, or the "false gratitude plant") springs in much the same soil ; is little hardier, if at all ; and requires to be so dug about and dunged, that there is little margin left for profit. The variety known as the Black Winter green (*H. V. Stevensoniana*) is rather for ornament than profit.

"John, do you see that bed of resignation?"—"It's doin' bravely, sir."—"John, I will not have it in my garden ; it flatters not the eye and comforts not the stomach ; root it out."—"Sir, I ha'e seen o' them that rase as high as nettles ; gran' plants !"—"What then ? Were they as tall as alps, if still unsavoury and bleak, what matters it ? Out with it, then ; and in its place put Laughter and a Good Conceit (that capital home evergreen), and a bush of Flowering Piety—but see it be the flowering sort—the other species is no ornament to any gentleman's Back Garden."

JNO. BUNYAN.

### TO W. E. HENLEY

Early in January, Stevenson, after a week's visit at Hyères from his friends Charles Baxter and W. E. Henley, accompanied them as far as Nice, and there suddenly went down with an attack of acute congestion, first of the lungs and then of the kidneys. At one moment there seemed no hope, but he recovered slowly and returned to Hyères. His friends had not written



during his illness, fearing him to be too far gone to care for letters. As he got better he began to chafe at their silence.

[Hyères, February or March, 1884]

### ONISED DESINVL

I CANNOT read, work, sleep, lie still, walk, or even play patience. These plagues will overtake all damned silencists, among whom, from this day out, number

the fiery indignator  
Roland Little Stevenson.

I counted miseries by the heap,  
But now have had my fill,  
I cannot see, I do not sleep,  
*But shortly I shall kill.*

Of many letters, here is a  
Full End.

The last will and testament of  
a demitting correspondent.

My indefatigable pen  
I here lay down forever. Men  
Have used, and left me, and forgot ;  
Men are entirely off the spot ;  
Men are a *blague* and an abuse ;  
And I commit them to the deuce !

RODERICK LAMOND STEVENSON.

I had companions, I had friends,  
I had of whisky various blends.  
The whisky was all drunk ; and lo !  
The friends were gone for evermo !

---

The loquacious man at peace.

And when I marked the ingratitude,  
I to my maker turned, and spewed.

RANDOLPH LOVEL STEVENSON.

Eructavit cor Timonis.

A pen broken, a subverted ink-pot.

Here endeth the familiar  
Correspondence of R. L. S.

All men are rot ; but there are two—  
Sidney, the oblivious Slade, and you—  
Who from that rabble stand confest  
Ten million times the rottenest.

R. L. S.

When I was sick and safe in gaol  
I thought my friends would never fail.  
One wrote me nothing ; t'other bard  
Sent me an insolent post-card.

R. L. S.

Epistolae  
Stevensonianae Omnes.  
Explicuerunt

IF NOBODY WRITES TO ME I  
SHALL DIE

I now write no more.

RICHARD LEFANU STEVENSON,  
Duke of Indignation

Terminus ; Silentia.

Mark Tacebo,  
Secretary

Isaac Blood  
John Blind  
Vain-hope Go-to-bed  
Israel Sciatica } witnesses.

FINIS Finaliter finium.

The finger on the mouth.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The allusions in the second paragraph are to the commanders in the Nile campaigns of those years.

*La Solitude, Hyères, 9th March, 1884*

MY DEAR S. C.,—You will already have received a not very sane note from me ; so your patience was rewarded—may I say, your patient silence ? However, now comes a letter, which on receipt, I thus acknowledge.

I have already expressed myself as to the political aspect.

GIRLS COLLEGE



About Grahame, I feel happier ; it does seem to have been really a good, neat, honest piece of work. We do not seem to be so badly off for commanders : Wolseley and Roberts, and this pile of Woods, Stewarts, Alisons, Grahames, and the like. Had we but ONE statesman on any side of the house !

Two chapters of *Otto* do remain : one to rewrite, one to create ; and I am not yet able to tackle them. For me it is my chief o' works ; hence probably not so for others, since it only means that I have here attacked the greatest difficulties. But some chapters towards the end : three in particular—I do think come off. I find them stirring, dramatic, and not unpoetical. We shall see, however ; as like as not, the effort will be more obvious than the success. For, of course, I strung myself hard to carry it out. The next will come easier, and possibly be more popular. I believe in the covering of much paper, each time with a definite and not too difficult artistic purpose ; and then, from time to time, drawing oneself up and trying, in a superior effort, to combine the facilities thus acquired or improved. Thus one progresses. But, mind, it is very likely that the big effort, instead of being the masterpiece, may be the blotted copy, the gymnastic exercise. This no man can tell ; only the brutal and licentious public, snouting in Mudie's wash trough, can return a dubious answer.

I am to-day, thanks to a pure heaven and a beneficent, loud-making, antiseptic mistral, on the high places as to health and spirits. Money holds out wonderfully. Fanny has gone for a drive to certain meadows which are now one sheet of jonquils : sea-bound meadows, the thought of which may freshen you in Bloomsbury. "Ye have been fresh and fair, Ye have been filled with flowers"—I fear I misquote. Why do people babble ? Surely Herrick, in his true vein, is superior to Martial himself, though Martial is a very pretty poet.

Did you ever read St. Augustine ? The first chapters of the *Confessions* are marked by a commanding genius : Shakespearean in depth. I was struck dumb, but, alas !

when you begin to wander into controversy, the poet drops out. His description of infancy is most seizing. And how is this: "Sed majorum nugae negotia vocantur; puerorum autem talia cum sint puniuntur a majoribus." Which is quite after the heart of R. L. S. See also his splendid passage about the "luminosus limes amicitiae" and the "nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis"; going on "*Utrumque* in confuso aestuabat et rapiebat imbecillam aetatem per abrupta cupiditatum." That "*Utrumque*" is a real contribution to life's science. Lust *alone* is but a pigmy; but it never, or rarely, attacks us single-handed.

Do you ever read (to go miles off, indeed) the incredible Barbey d'Aurévilly? A psychological Poe—to be for a moment Henley. I own with pleasure I prefer him with all his folly, rot, sentiment, and mixed metaphors, to the whole modern school in France. It makes me laugh when it's nonsense; and when he gets an effect (though it's still nonsense and mere Poëry, not poesy) it wakens me. *Ce qui ne meurt pas* nearly killed me with laughing, and left me—well, it left me very nearly admiring the old ass. At least, it's the kind of thing one feels one couldn't do. The dreadful moonlight, when they all three sit silent in the room—by George, sir, it's imagined—and the brief scene between the husband and wife is all there. *Quant au fond*, the whole thing, of course, is a fever dream, and worthy of eternal laughter. Had the young man broken stones, and the two women been hard-working honest prostitutes, there had been an end of the whole immoral and baseless business: you could at least have respected them in that case.

I also read *Petronius Arbiter*, which is a rum work, not so immoral as most modern works, but singularly silly. I tackled some Tacitus too. I got them with a dreadful French crib on the same page with the text, which helps me along and drives me mad. The French do not even try to translate. They try to be much more classical than the classics, with astounding results of barrenness and tedium. Tacitus, I fear, was too solid for me. I liked



the war part ; but the dreary intriguing at Rome was too much.

R. L. S.

### TO MR. DICK

This correspondent was for many years head clerk and confidential assistant in the family firm at Edinburgh.

*La Solitude, Hyères, Var, 12th March, 1884*

MY DEAR MR. DICK,—I have been a great while owing you a letter ; but I am not without excuses as you may have heard. I overworked to get a piece of work finished before I had my holiday, thinking to enjoy it more ; and instead of that, the machinery near hand came sundry in my hands ! like Murdie's uniform. However, I am now, I think, in a fair way of recovery : I think I was made, what there is of me, of whipcord and thorn-switches ; surely I am tough ! But I fancy I shall not overdrive again, or not so long. It is my theory that work is highly beneficial ; but that it should, if possible, and certainly for such partially broken down instruments as the thing I call my body, be taken in batches, with a clear break and breathing space between. I always do vary my work, laying one thing aside to take up another, not merely because I believe it rests the brain, but because I have found it most beneficial to the result. Reading, Bacon says, makes a full man ; but what makes me full on any subject is to banish it for a time from all my thoughts.—However, what I now propose, is, out of every quarter, to work two months and rest the third. I believe I shall get more done, as I generally manage, on my present scheme, to have four months' impotent illness, and two of imperfect health, one before, one after, I break down. This, at least, is not an economical division of the year.

I have been pleased lately to get very cheerful letters from my father. This seems a good sign. I trust, for everyone's sake, he may stand his London business well. I re-read the other day that heart-breaking book the life of

Scott ; and reading it with one eye on poor Uncle David and the other, in a kind of fear, upon my father, the pity of these last sicknesses came very sharply home to me. One should read such books now and then—but O, not often. As I live, I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place. The Waverley novels are better to re-read than the over-true life, fine as dear Sir Walter was. The Bible, in most parts, is a cheerful book ; it is our little piping theologies, tracts, and sermons that are dull and dowie ; and even the Shorter Catechism, which is scarcely a work of consolation, opens with the best and shortest and completest sermon ever written : upon Man's Chief End.

This is not a very pertinent rigmarole ; but the pen goeth as it listeth. How goes the lesser David ? Remember me to him most kindly, and some day, let me know how it goes with both of you—and with my father in business. I wonder whether I was most afraid of the lesser David, or he of me. But let me tell you the first appearance of an amanuensis enables a person to enter into the sentiments of Michael Scott when he was cornered by the Deil.

Believe me,

my dear Mr. Dick,

very sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

*P.S.*—You see I have changed my hand. I was threatened apparently with scrivener's cramp, and at any rate had got to write so small that the revisal of my MS. tried my eyes ; hence my signature alone remains upon the old model ! for it appears if I changed that, I should be cut off from my "vivers."

R. L. S.

### TO COSMO MONKHOUSE

This amiable and excellent public servant, art-critic, and verse-writer was a friend of old Savile Club days ; the drift of his letter



can easily be guessed from this reply. The reference to Lamb is to the essay on the Restoration dramatists.

*La Solitude, Hyères, March 16, 1884*

MY DEAR MONKHOUSE,—You see with what promptitude I plunge into correspondence ; but the truth is, I am condemned to a complete inaction, stagnate dismally, and love a letter. Yours, which would have been welcome at any time, was thus doubly precious.

Dover sounds somewhat shiveringly in my ears. You should see the weather *I* have—cloudless, clear as crystal, with just a punkah-draft of the most aromatic air, all pine and gum tree. You would be ashamed of Dover ; you would scruple to refer, sir, to a spot so paltry. To be idle at Dover is a strange pretension ; pray, how do you warm yourself ? If I were there I should grind knives or write blank verse, or—— But at least you do not bathe ? It is idle to deny it : I have—I may say I nourish—a growing jealousy of the robust, large-legged, healthy Britain-dwellers, patient of grog, scorers of the timid umbrella, innocuously breathing fog : all which I once was, and I am ashamed to say liked it. How ignorant is youth ! grossly rolling among unselected pleasures ; and how nobler, purer, sweeter, and lighter, to sip the choice tonic, to recline in the luxurious invalid chair, and to tread, well-shawled, the little round of the constitutional. Seriously, do you like to repose ? Ye Gods, I hate it. I never rest with any acceptance ; I do not know what people mean who say they like sleep and that damned bedtime which, since long ere I was breeched, has rung a knell to all my day's doings and beings. And when a man, seemingly sane, tells me he has “fallen in love with stagnation,” I can only say to him, “You will never be a Pirate !” This may not cause any regret to Mrs. Monkhouse ; but in your own soul it will clang hollow—think of it ! Never ! After all boyhood's aspirations and youth's immoral day-dreams, you are condemned to sit down, grossly draw in your chair to the fat board, and be a beastly Burgess till you die. Can it be ? Is there not some escape, some furlough from the Moral Law, some holiday jaunt contrivable into a Better

Land ? Shall we never shed blood ? This prospect is too grey.

Here lies a man who never did  
Anything but what he was bid ;  
Who lived his life in paltry ease,  
And died of commonplace disease.

To confess plainly, I had intended to spend my life (or any leisure I might have from Piracy upon the high seas) as the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry, devastating whole valleys. I can still, looking back, see myself in many favourite attitudes ; signalling for a boat from my pirate ship with a pocket-handkerchief, I at the jetty end, and one or two of my bold blades keeping the crowd at bay ; or else turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley : this last by moonlight.

*Et point du tout.* I am a poor scribe, and have scarce broken a commandment to mention, and have recently dined upon cold veal ! As for you (who probably had some ambitions), I hear of you living at Dover, in lodgings, like the beasts of the field. But in heaven, when we get there, we shall have a good time, and see some real carnage. For heaven is—must be—that great Kingdom of Antinomia, which Lamb saw dimly adumbrated in the *Country Wife*, where the worm which never dies (the conscience) peacefully expires, and the sinner lies down beside the Ten Commandments. Till then, here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling, with neither health nor vice for anything more spirited than procrastination, which I may well call the Consolation Stakes of Wickedness ; and by whose diligent practice, without the least amusement to ourselves, we can rob the orphan and bring down grey hairs with sorrow to the dust.

This astonishing gush of nonsense I now hasten to close, envelope, and expedite to Shakespeare's Cliff. Remember me to Shakespeare, and believe me, yours very sincerely,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



## TO EDMUND GOSSE

Mr. Gosse had written describing the office which he then occupied, a picturesque old-fashioned chamber in the upper stories of the Board of Trade.

*La Solitude, Hyères, March 17, 1884*

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Your office—office is profanely said—your bower upon the leads is divine. Have you, like Pepys, “the right to fiddle” there? I see you mount the companion, barbiton in hand, and, fluttered about by city sparrows, pour forth your spirit in a voluntary. Now when the spring begins, you must lay in your flowers: how do you say about a potted hawthorn? Would it bloom? Wallflower is a choice pot-herb; lily-of-the-valley, too, and carnation, and Indian cress trailed about the window, is not only beautiful by colour, but the leaves are good to eat. I recommend thyme and rosemary for the aroma, which should not be left upon one side; they are good quiet growths.

On one of your tables keep a great map spread out; a chart is still better—it takes one further—the havens with their little anchors, the rocks, banks, and soundings, are adorably marine; and such furniture will suit your ship-shape habitation. I wish I could see those cabins; they smile upon me with the most intimate charm. From your leads, do you behold St. Paul’s? I always like to see the Foolscape; it is London *per se* and no spot from which it is visible is without romance. Then it is good company for the man of letters, whose veritable nursing Pater-Noster is so near at hand.

I am all at a standstill; as idle as a painted ship, but not so pretty. My romance, which has so nearly butchered me in the writing, not even finished; though so near, thank God, that a few days of tolerable strength will see the roof upon that structure. I have worked very hard at it, and so do not expect any great public favour. *In moments of effort, one learns to do the easy things that people like.* There is the golden maxim; thus one should strain and then play, strain again and play again. The strain is for us, it edu-

cates ; the play is for the reader, and pleases. Do you not feel so ? We are ever threatened by two contrary faults : both deadly. To sink into what my forefathers would have called "rank conformity," and to pour forth cheap replicas, upon the one hand ; upon the other, and still more insidiously present, to forget that art is a diversion and a decoration, that no triumph or effort is of value, nor anything worth reaching except charm.—Yours affectionately,  
R. L. S.

### TO MISS FERRIER

Soon after the date of the following letter Miss Ferrier went out to her friends and stayed with them through the trying weeks which followed.

*La Solitude, Hyères [March 22, 1884]*

MY DEAR MISS FERRIER,—Are you really going to fail us ? This seems a dreadful thing. My poor wife, who is not well off for friends on this bare coast, has been promising herself, and I have been promising her, a rare acquisition. And now Miss Burn has failed, and you utter a very doubtful note. You do not know how delightful this place is, nor how anxious we are for a visit. Look at the names : "The Solitude"—is that romantic ? The palm-trees ? how is that for the gorgeous East ? "Vai" ? the name of a river—"the quiet waters by" ! 'Tis true, they are in another department, and consist of stones and a biennial spate ; but what a music, what a splash of brooks, for the imagination ! We have hills ; we have skies ; the roses are putting forth, as yet sparsely ; the meadows by the sea are one sheet of jonquils ; the birds sing as in an English May—for, considering we are in France and serve up our song-birds, I am ashamed to say, on a little field of toast and with a sprig of thyme (my own receipt) in their most innocent and now unvocal bellies—considering all this, we have a wonderful fair wood-music round this Solitude of ours. What can I say more ?—All this awaits you. *Kennst du das Land*, in short.—Your sincere friend,  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



To W. H. Low

The verses enclosed were the set entitled "The Canoe Speaks," afterwards printed in *Underwoods*. Stevenson was suffering at this time from a temporary weakness of the eyesight.

*La Solitude, Hyères [April, 1884]*

MY DEAR LOW,—The blind man in these sprawled lines sends greeting. I have been ill, as perhaps the papers told you. The news—"great news—glorious news—sec-ond ed-ition!"—went the round in England.

Anyway, I now thank you for your pictures, which, particularly the Arcadian one, we all (Bob included, he was here sick-nursing me) much liked.

Herewith are a set of verses which I thought pretty enough to send to press. Then I thought of the *Manhattan*, towards whom I have guilty and compunctious feelings. Last, I had the best thought of all—to send them to you in case you might think them suitable for illustration. It seemed to me quite in your vein. If so, good; if not, hand them on to *Manhattan*, *Century*, or *Lippincott*, at your pleasure, as all three desire my work or pretend to. But I trust the lines will not go unattended. Some riverside will haunt you; and O! be tender to my bathing girls. The lines are copied in my wife's hand, as I cannot see to write otherwise than with the pen of Cormoran, Gargantua, or Nimrod. Love to your wife.—Yours ever,  
R. L. S.

Copied it myself.

To THOMAS STEVENSON

*La Solitude, Hyères, April 19, 1884*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Yesterday I very powerfully stated the *Hæresis Stevensoniana*, or the complete body of divinity of the family theologian, to Miss Ferrier. She was much impressed; so was I. You are a great heresiarch; and I know no better. Whaur the devil did ye get thon about

the soap? Is it altogether your own? I never heard it elsewhere; and yet I suspect it must have been held at some time or other, and if you were to look up you would probably find yourself condemned by some Council.

I am glad to hear you are so well. The hear is excellent. The *Cornhills* came; I made Miss Ferrier read us *Thrawn Janet*, and was quite bowled over by my own works. *The Merry Men* I mean to make much longer, with a whole new dénouement, not yet quite clear to me. *The Story of a Lie* I must re-write entirely also, as it is too weak and ragged, yet is worth saving for the Admiral. Did I ever tell you that the Admiral was recognised in America?

When they are all on their legs this will make an excellent collection.

Has Davie never read *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, or *The Antiquary*? All of which are worth three *Waverleys*. I think *Kenilworth* better than *Waverley*; *Nigel*, too; and *Quentin Durward* about as good. But it shows a true piece of insight to prefer *Waverley*, for it is different; and though not quite coherent, better worked in parts than almost any other: surely more carefully. It is undeniable that the love of the slap-dash and the shoddy grew upon Scott with success. Perhaps it does on many of us, which may be the granite on which D.'s opinion stands. However, I hold it, in Patrick Walker's phrase, for an "old, condemned, damnable error." Dr. Simson was condemned by P. W. as being "a bagful of" such. One of Patrick's amenities!

Another ground there may be to D.'s opinion; those who avoid (or seek to avoid) Scott's facility are apt to be continually straining and torturing their style to get in more of life. And to many the extra significance does not redeem the strain.

DOCTOR STEVENSON.



## TO W. E. HENLEY

*La Solitude, Hyères, April 20th, 1884*

I HAVE been really ill for two days, hemorrhage, weakness, extreme nervousness that will not let me lie a moment, and damned sciatica o' nights ; but to-day I am on the recovery. Time ; for I was miserable. It is not often that I suffer, with all my turns and tumbles, from the sense of serious illness ; and I hate it, as I believe everybody does. And then the combination of not being able to read, not being allowed to speak, being too weak to write, and not wishing to eat, leaves a man with some empty seconds. But I bless God, it's over now ; to-day I am much mended.

Insatiable gulf, greedier than hell, and more silent than the woods of Styx, have you or have you not lost the dedication to the *Child's Garden* ? Answer that plain question, as otherwise I must try to tackle to it once again.

Sciatica is a word employed much by Shakespeare in a certain connection. 'Tis true, he was no physician, but as I read, he had smarted in his day. I, too, do smart. And yet this keen soprano agony, these veins of fire and bomb-shell explosions in the knee, are as nothing to a certain dull, drowsy pain I had when my kidneys were congested at Nice ; there was death in that ; the creak of Charon's rowlocks, and the miasmas of the Styx. I may say plainly, much as I have lost the power of bearing pain, I had still rather suffer much than die. Not only the love of life grows on me, but the fear of certain odd end-seconds grows as well. 'Tis a suffocating business, take it how you will ; and Tyrrel and Forest only bunglers.

Well, this is an essay on death, or worse, on dying : to return to daylight and the winds, I perceive I have grown to live too much in my work and too little in life. 'Tis the dollars to it : the world is too much. Whenever I think I would like to live a little, I hear the butcher's cart resounding through the neighbourhood ; and so to plunge again. The fault is a good fault for me ; to be able to do so, is to succeed in life ; and my life has been a huge success. I can live with joy and without disgust in the art by which I

try to support myself ; I have the best wife in the world ; I have rather more praise and nearly as much coin as I deserve ; my friends are many and true-hearted. Sir, it is a big thing in successes. And if mine anchorage lies something open to the wind, Sciatica, if the crew are blind, and the captain spits blood, one cannot have all, and I may be patched up again, who knows ? " His timbers yet are (indifferently) sound, and he may float again."

Thanks for the word on *Silverado*.—Yours ever,

THE SCIATICATED BARD.

### TO TREVOR HADDON

The allusions to Skelt, the last of the designers and etchers of cheap sheets illustrating the popular dramas and melodramas of the day, will need no explanation to readers familiar with the essay, *A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*.

*La Solitude, Hyères, April 23rd, 1884*

DEAR MR. HADDON —I am pleased to see your hand again, and, waiting my wife's return, to guess at some of the contents. For various things have befallen me of late. First, as you see, I had to change my hand ; lastly I have fallen into a kind of blindness, and cannot read. This more inclines me for something to do, to answer your letter before I have read it, a safe plan familiar to diplomatists.

I gather from half shut eyes that you were a Skeltist ; now seriously that is a good beginning ; there is a deal of romance (cheap) in Skelt. Look at it well, and you will see much of Dickens. And even Skelt is better than conscientious, grey back-gardens, and conscientious, dull still lives. The great lack of art just now is a spice of life and interest ; and I prefer galvanism to acquiescence in the grave. All do not ; 'tis an affair of tastes ; and mine are young. Those who like death have their innings to-day with art that is like mahogany and horsehair furniture, solid, true, serious and as dead as Cæsar. I wish I could read *Treasure Island* ; I believe I should like it. But work done, for the artist, is the Golden Goose killed ; you sell



its feathers and lament the eggs. To-morrow the fresh woods !

I have been seriously ill, and do not pick up with that finality that I should like to see. I linger over and digest my convalescence like a favourite wine ; and what with blindness, green spectacles, and seclusion, cut but a poor figure in the world.

I made out at the end that you were asking some advice—but what, my failing eyes refuse to inform me. I must keep a sheet for the answer ; and Mrs. Stevenson still delays, and still I have no resource against tedium but the waggling of this pen.

You seem to me to be a pretty lucky young man ; keep your eyes open to your mercies. That part of piety is eternal ; and the man who forgets to be grateful has fallen asleep in life. Please to recognise that you are unworthy of all that befalls you—unworthy, too, I hear you wail, of this terrible sermon ; but indeed we are not worthy of our fortunes ; love takes us in a counterfeit, success comes to us at play, health stays with us while we abuse her ; and even when we gird at our fellow-men, we should remember that it is of their good will alone, that we still live and still have claims to honour. The sins of the most innocent, if they were exactly visited, would ruin them to the doer. And if you know any man who believes himself to be worthy of a wife's love, a friend's affection, a mistress's caress, even if venal, you may rest assured he is worthy of nothing but a kicking. I fear men who have no open faults ; what do they conceal ? We are not meant to be good in this world, but to try to be, and fail, and keep on trying ; and when we get a cake to say, " Thank God ! " and when we get a buffet, to say, " Just so : well hit ! "

I have been getting some of the buffets of late ; but have amply earned them:—you need not pity me. Pity sick children and the individual poor man ; not the mass. Don't pity anybody else, and never pity fools. The optimistic Stevenson ; but there is a sense in these wanderings.

Now I have heard your letter, and my sermon was not

mal-à-propos. For you seem to be complaining. Everybody's home is depressing, I believe ; it is their difficult business to make it less so. There is an unpleasant saying, which would have pricked me sharply at your age.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### TO COSMO MONKHOUSE

*La Solitude, Hyères [April 24, 1884]*

DEAR MONKHOUSE,—If you are in love with repose, here is your occasion : change with me. I am too blind to read, hence no reading ; I am too weak to walk, hence no walking ; I am not allowed to speak, hence no talking ; but the great simplification has yet to be named ; for, if this goes on, I shall soon have nothing to eat—and hence, O Hallelujah ! hence no eating. The offer is a fair one : I have not sold myself to the devil, for I could never find him. I am married, but so are you. I sometimes write verses, but so do you. Come ! *Hic quies !* As for the commandments, I have broken them so small that they are the dust of my chambers ; you walk upon them, triturate and toothless ; and with the Golosh of Philosophy, they shall not bite your heel. True, the tenement is falling. Ay, friend, but yours also. Take a large view ; what is a year or two ? dust in the balance ! 'Tis done, behold you Cosmo Stevenson, and me R. L. Monkhouse ; you at Hyères, I in London ; you rejoicing in the clammiest repose, me proceeding to tear your tabernacle into rags, as I have already so admirably torn my own.

My place to which I now introduce you—it is yours—is like a London house, high and very narrow ; upon the lungs I will not linger ; the heart is large enough for a ballroom ; the belly greedy and inefficient ; the brain stocked with the most damnable explosives, like a dynamiter's den. The whole place is well furnished, though not in a very pure taste ; Corinthian much of it ; showy and not strong.



About your place I shall try to find my way alone, an interesting exploration. Imagine me, as I go to bed, falling over a blood-stained remorse ; opening that cupboard in the cerebellum and being welcomed by the spirit of your murdered uncle. I should probably not like your remorsees ; I wonder if you will like mine ; I have a spirited assortment ; they whistle in my ear o' nights like a northeaster. I trust yours don't dine with the family ; mine are better mannered ; you will hear nought of them till 2 A.M., except one, to be sure, that I have made a pet of, but he is small ; I keep him in buttons, so as to avoid commentaries ; you will like him much—if you like what is genuine.

Must we likewise change religions ? Mine is a good article, with a trick of stopping ; cathedral bell note ; ornamental dial ; supported by Venus and the Graces ; quite a summer-parlour piety. Of yours, since your last, I fear there is little to be said.

There is one article I wish to take away with me : my spirits. They suit me. I don't want yours ; I like my own ; I have had them a long while in bottle. It is my only reservation.—Yours (as you decide),

R. L. MONKHOUSE.

TO W. E. HENLEY

*La Solitude, Hyères* [May, 1884]

DEAR BOY,—*Old Mortality* \* is out, and I am glad to say Coggie likes it. We like her immensely.

I keep better, but no great shakes yet ; cannot work—cannot : that is flat, not even verses : as for prose, that more active place is shut on me long since.

My view of life is essentially the comic ; and the romantically comic. *As You Like It* is to me the most bird-haunted spot in letters ; *Tempest* and *Twelfth Night* follow. These are what I mean by poetry and nature. I make an effort of my mind to be quite one with Molière, except upon the

The essay so called, suggested by the death of J. W. Ferrier. See *Memories and Portraits*. "Coggie" is the familiar name of a sister of Ferrier's.

stage, where his inimitable *jeux de scène* beggar belief ; but you will observe they are stage-plays—things *ad hoc* ; not great Olympian debauches of the heart and fancy ; hence more perfect, and not so great. Then I come, after great wanderings, to Carmosine, and to Fantasio ; to one part of *La Dernière Aldini* (which, by the by, we might dramatise in a week), to the notes that Meredith has found, Evan and the postillion, Evan and Rose, Harry in Germany. And to me these things are the good ; beauty, touched with sex and laughter ; beauty with God's earth for the background. Tragedy does not seem to me to come off ; and when it does, it does so by the heroic illusion ; the anti-masque has been omitted ; laughter, which attends on all our steps in life, and sits by the deathbed, and certainly redacts the epitaph, laughter has been lost from these great-hearted lies. But the comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life (laughter and tragedy-in-a-good-humour having kissed), that is the last word of moved representation ; embracing the greatest number of elements of fate and character ; and telling its story, not with the one eye of pity, but with the two of pity and mirth.

R. L. S.

A letter from the proof-reader of R. L. S.'s *Black Arrow* and R. L. S.'s reply.

*Red Lion House, London*  
[Undated]

TO THE AUTHOR

DEAR SIR,—At the risk of incurring your displeasure I venture to point out to you what may be an intentional omission, but which, I think, is probably an oversight. There were four black arrows, to be used with deadly intent. Three have been accounted for. In this concluding instalment the fourth has not been mentioned ; nor is there any indication of the fate of Sir Oliver, for whom the fourth arrow is evidently intended. This has occurred to me all the more forcibly because Sir Oliver's dreadful terror of a violent death has been on more than one occasion so vividly represented.

Believe me, Sir, to be, not your critic, but your servant  
THE READER, *Young Folks Magazine*.



*La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France*  
[Undated]

TO THE READER

DEAR SIR,—To the contrary I thank you most cordially ; indeed, the story having changed and run away from me in the course of writing, the dread fate I had originally designed for Sir Oliver became impossible, and I had, I blush to say it, clean forgot him.

Thanks to you, Sir, he shall die the death. I enclose to-night slips 49, 50, 51 ; and to-morrow or next day, after having butchered the priest, shall despatch the rest.

I must not, however, allow this opportunity to go by without once more thanking you—for I think we have, in a ghostly fashion, met before on the margin of proof—for the unflagging intelligence and care with which my MS. is read. I have a large and generally a disastrous experience of printers and printers' readers. Nowhere do I send worse copy than to *Young Folks*, for with this sort of story, I rarely re-write ; yet nowhere am I so well used. And the skill with which the somewhat arbitrary and certainly baffling dialect was picked up in the case of the *Black Arrow*, filled me with a gentle surprise.

I will add that you have humiliated me : that you should have been so much more wide-awake than myself is both humiliating and, I say it very humbly, perhaps flattering.

The reader is a kind of veiled prophet between the author and the public—a veiled anonymous intermediary : and it pleases me to greet and thank him.

Your obliged servant,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.  
Alias Capt'n George North.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

Early in May Stevenson again fell very dangerously ill, with hemorrhage of the lungs, and lay for several weeks between life and death, until towards the end of June he was brought sufficiently round to venture by slow stages on the journey to England, staying for two or three weeks at Royat on the way. His

correspondent had lately been appointed Clark Reader in English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge.

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] *From my Bed,*  
May 29, 1884

DEAR GOSSE,—The news of the Professorate found me in the article of—well, of heads or tails ; I am still in bed, and a very poor person. You must thus excuse my damned delay ; but, I assure you, I was delighted. You will believe me the more, if I confess to you that my first sentiment was envy ; yes, sir, on my blood-boltered couch I envied the professor. However, it was not of long duration ; the double thought that you deserved and that you would thoroughly enjoy your success fell like balsam on my wounds. How came it that you never communicated my rejection of Gilder's offer for the *Rhone* ? But it matters not. Such earthly vanities are over for the present. This has been a fine well-conducted illness. A month in bed ; a month of silence ; a fortnight of not stirring my right hand ; a month of not moving without being lifted. Come ! *Ça y est* : devilish like being dead.—Yours, dear Professor, academically,

R. L. S.

I am soon to be moved to Royat ; an invalid valet goes with me ! I got him cheap—second-hand.

In turning over my late friend Ferrier's commonplace book, I find three poems from *Viol and Flute* copied out in his hand : " When Flower-time," " Love in Winter," and " Mistrust." They are capital too. But I thought the fact would interest you. He was no poetist either ; so it means the more. " Love in W. ! " I like the best.

#### TO MRS. MACMORLAND

MY DEAR MRS. MACMORLAND,\*—And so it was—the painful truth was thus and not otherwise and I am a red-

\* Concerning this correspondent I have no knowledge and find no other reference to her.—S. C.



handed, naked savage, adorned with scalps. I do nothing now but scalp, except neglect to meet my liabilities; my position as a fraudulent bankrupt is the only thing undeniably civilised about me. I have been ill; I have done no work for eight months; I have about ruined my father; and as I have never answered a letter nor paid a debt, I am in self-defence, obliged to glory in my abasement and wrap myself in the Pirate Flag. Even my wife, I cheat and neglect—to keep my hand in.

In a better world I may again find and attire myself in what once I used to call my virtues. Or perhaps, when I recollect the various trunks, boxes and cases with which I have bestrewed the fair face of Europe and a considerable proportion of the states of North America—I may find, in one of them, the aged and leathery remnants of my conscience. But in the meanwhile take me for what I am, a Devil Incarnate, An Unrepentant Bilk and Bandit, A man who lacks but the opportunity to Ruin Empires.

Don't try to excuse me; I am inexcusable. But write and give us news; and remember me in your prayers.

R. L. D. STEVENSON.

Chalet la Solitude.

Hyères,  
Var,  
France.

I have added, as you will perceive, a new initial to my signature, a D., fatal capital! Its significance, the mind shudders to conceive.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Enclosing some supplementary verses for the *Child's Garden*.

Marseille, June, 1884

DEAR S. C.,—Are these four in time? No odds about order. I am at Marseille and stood the journey wonderfully. Better address Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, Puy de

Dôme. You see how this d—d poeshie flows from me in sickness : Are they good or bad ? Wha kens ? But I like the *Little Land*, I think, as well as any. As time goes on I get more fancy in. We have no money, but a valet and a maid. The valet is no end ; how long can you live on a valet ? Vive le valet ! I am tempted to call myself a valetudinarian. I love my love with a V because he is a Valetudinarian ; I took him to Valetta or Valais, gave him his Vails and tenderly addressed him with one word,

Vale.

P.S.—It does not matter of course about order. As soon as I have all the slips I shall organise the book for the publisher. A set of 8 will be put together under the title *An Only Child* ; another cycle of 10 will be called *In the Garden*, and other six called *Bedtime* to end all up. It will now make quite a little volume of a good way upwards of 100 pp. Will you instruct Bain to send me a Bible ; of a type that I can read without blindness ; the better if with notes ; there is a Clarendon Press Bible, pray see it yourself. I also want Ewald's *History* in a translation.

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The play of *Deacon Brodie*, the joint work of R. L. S. and W. E. H., was to be performed in London early in July.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July, 1884*]

DEAR S. C.,—Books received with great thanks. Very nice books, though I see you underrate my cecity : I could no more read their beautiful Bible than I could sail in heaven. However, I have sent for another and can read the rest for patience.

I quite understand your feelings about the *Deacon*, which is a far way behind ; but I get miserable when I think of Henley cutting this splash and standing, I fear, to lose a



great deal of money. It is about Henley, not *Brodie*, that I care. I fear my affections are not strong to my past works ; they are blotted out by others ; and anyhow the *Deacon* is damn bad.

I am half asleep and can no more discourse. Say to your friends, " Look here, some friends of mine are bringing out a play ; it has some stuff ; suppose you go and see it." But I know I am a cold, unbelieving fellow, incapable of those hot claps that honour you and Henley and therefore—I am asleep. *Child's Garden* (first instalment) come. Fanny ill ; self asleep.

R. L. S.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, [July, 1884]*

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—The weather has been demoniac ; I have had a skiff of cold, and was finally obliged to take to bed entirely ; to-day, however, it has cleared, the sun shines, and I begin to

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*Several days after.*—I have been out once, but now am back in bed. I am better, and keep better, but the weather is a mere injustice. The imitation of Edinburgh is, at times, deceptive ; there is a note among the chimney pots that suggests Howe Street ; though I think the shrillest spot in Christendom was not upon the Howe Street side, but in front, just under the Miss Graemes' big chimney stack. It had a fine alto character—a sort of bleat that used to divide the marrow in my joints—say in the wee, slack hours. That music is now lost to us by rebuilding ; another air that I remember, not regret, was the solo of the gas-burner in the little front room ; a knickering, flighty, fleering, and yet spectral cackle. I mind it above all on winter afternoons, late, when the window was blue and spotted with rare raindrops, and, looking out, the cold evening was seen blue all over, with the lamps of Queen's

and Frederick's Street dotting it with yellow, and flaring eastward in the squalls. Heavens, how unhappy I have been in such circumstances—I, who have now positively forgotten the colour of unhappiness; who am full like a fed ox, and dull like a fresh turf, and have no more spiritual life, for good or evil, than a French bagman.

We are at Chabassière's, for of course it was nonsense to go up the hill when we could not walk.

The child's poems in a far extended form are likely soon to be heard of—which Cummy I dare say will be glad to know. They will make a book of about one hundred pages.—Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.

### TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I had reported to Stevenson a remark made by one of his warmest admirers, Sir E. Burne-Jones, on some particular analogy, I forget what, between a passage of Defoe and one in *Treasure Island*.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July, 1884*]

. . . HERE is a quaint thing, I have read *Robinson, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Memoirs of a Cavalier, History of the Plague, History of the Great Storm, Scotch Church and Union*. And there my knowledge of Defoe ends—except a book, the name of which I forget, about Peterborough in Spain, which Defoe obviously did not write, and could not have written if he wanted. To which of these does R. J. refer? I guess it must be the history of the Scottish Church. I jest: for, of course, I *know* it must be a book I have never read, and which this makes me keen to read—I mean *Captain Singleton*. Can it be got and sent to me? If *Treasure Island* is at all like it, it will be delightful. I was just the other day wondering at my folly in not remembering it, when I was writing *T. I.*, as a mine for pirate tips. *T. I.* came out of Kingsley's *At Last*, where I got the Dead Man's Chest—and that was the seed—and out of the great Captain Johnson's *History of Notorious*



*Pirates.* The scenery is Californian in part, and in part *chic*.

I was downstairs to-day ! So now I am a made man—till the next time.

R. L. STEVENSON.

If it was *Captain Singleton*, send it to me, won't you ?

*Later.*—My life dwindles into a kind of valley of the shadow picnic. I cannot read ; so much of the time (as to-day) I must not speak above my breath, that to play patience, or to see my wife play it, is become the be-all and the end-all of my dim career. To add to my gaiety, I may write letters, but there are few to answer. Patience and Poesy are thus my rod and staff ; with these I not unpleasantly support my days.

I am very dim, dumb, dowie, and damnable. I hate to be silenced ; and if to talk by signs is my forte (as I contend), to understand them cannot be my wife's. Do not think me unhappy ; I have not been so for years ; but I am blurred, inhabit the debatable frontier of sleep, and have but dim designs upon activity. All is at a standstill : books closed, paper put aside, the voice, the eternal voice of R. L. S., well silenced. Hence this plaint reaches you with no very great meaning, no very great purpose, and written part in slumber by a heavy, dull, somnolent, superannuated son of a bedpost.

TO W. E. HENLEY

I suppose, but cannot remember, that I had in the meantime sent him *Captain Singleton*.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July, 1884*]

DEAR BOY,—I am glad that ——— has disappointed you. Depend upon it, nobody is so bad as to be worth scalping, except your dearest friends and parents ; and scalping them may sometimes be avoided by scalping yourself. I grow daily more lymphatic and benign ; bring me a dynamiter, that I may embrace and bless him !—So,

if I continue to evade the friendly hemorrhage, I shall be spared in anger to pour forth senile and insignificant volumes, and the clever lads in the journals, not doubting of the eye of Nemesis, shall mock and gird at me.

All this seems excellent news of the *Deacon*. But O ! that the last tableau, on from Leslie's entrance, were re-written ! We had a great opening there and missed it. I read for the first time *Captain Singleton* ; it has points ; and then I re-read *Colonel Jack* with ecstasy ; the first part is as much superior to *Robinson Crusoe* as *Robinson* is to—*The Inland Voyage*. It is pretty, good, philosophical, dramatic, and as picturesque as a promontory goat in a gale of wind. Get it and fill your belly with honey.

Fanny hopes to be in time for the *Deacon*. I was out yesterday, and none the worse. We leave Monday.

R. L. S.





